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# SOLOMON:

## HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

BY  
REV. F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

ARCHDEACON AND CANON OF WESTMINSTER; AND CHAPLAIN  
IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN.

*EIGHTH THOUSAND*



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## INTRODUCTION.

**Chequered fortunes of David—His early prosperity as a king—His career darkened—Uriah and Bathsheba—Joab's power over David—The birth of Solomon—Significance of David's remorse.**

FEW careers have been more chequered than that of David ; few even of the lives recorded in the sacred volume are more deeply instructive. The ruddy shepherd-lad, who tended his few poor sheep in the wilderness, rapidly sprang into the great warrior, the darling and hero, the poet and ruler of his people. Gaining yearly as Saul lost, superseding even Jonathan in the favour of the multitude, he had been so openly regarded as the future wearer of the crown, that the king's jealousy drove him into outlawry, and repeatedly sought his life. Saved from imminent perils, and from incessant temptations to adopt a career of crime, he had shown such consummate tact and skill as the chief of a dangerous band, that on Saul's death he had been chosen king by the tribe of Judah, and solemnly anointed at Hebron. After he had reigned seven and a half years as King of Judah, the murder of Ishbosheth, son of Saul, left Israel free to elect a successor, and David was unanimously invited to rule over the Twelve Tribes. Then began a period of unexampled prosperity. He gained secure possession of the City of Jerusalem, and consecrated it by the translation of the Ark thither from Gath-Rimmon. He strengthened his throne by a Court, a Bodyguard, and an Army. God "made him a great name like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth."<sup>1</sup> He became the father of a large and beautiful family. He was recognized not only as a King, but also as a Psalmist and Prophet. At

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 9.



## SOLOMON.

times he even wore an ephod, and exercised many of the functions of the priestly office.<sup>1</sup> On every border of his kingdom he drove back and subdued his hostile neighbours. The Philistines, the Moabites, the rising power of Syria, the predatory Edomites, and Amalekites, were thoroughly broken into submission. From a petty chieftain he became a great sovereign. With the Phœnicians in the north-west, he was in cordial and intimate alliance. One misfortune alone—a three years' famine—seems to have disturbed the brighter and earlier portion of his reign.

Then calamity burst over him like thunder out of a clear sky, and his glory and prosperity were shattered by his own sin. The crime, the infamy, of one hour precipitated upon him for all the rest of his life a terrible load of disgrace and ruin.

He had an officer named Uriah, who like many of those who served in his bodyguard, belonged to the old race of Canaan. He was by birth a Hittite, but had probably become a proselyte, and was, at any rate, conspicuous for his chivalrous bravery and austere sense of duty. Among his comrades was Eliam, a son of Ahitophel,<sup>2</sup> who, like himself, had risen by valour and conduct to be one of the thirty commanders of David's thirty companies. Eliam had a fair daughter named Bathsheba,<sup>3</sup> and it was natural that he should have given her in marriage to a fellow-officer so distinguished as Uriah. The Hittite soldier loved her with a passionate tenderness.<sup>4</sup> While he was absent in the war against the Ammonites, Bathsheba lived in his house, which was one of those which clustered under the shadow of David's palace on Mount Zion. One evening David, according to his wont, was walking on his palace-roof, after the burning

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. vi. 13, 17, 18 ; 1 Chron. xvi. 42.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. xxiii. 34. Jerome ("Qu. Heb." on 2 Sam. ix. 3 ; 1 Chron. iii. 5) mentions the tradition, which he had learnt from the Rabbis who taught him Hebrew, that these two Eliams—the son of Ahitophel and the father of Bathsheba—were one and the same person. Eliam's name is omitted from 1 Chron. xi., whence some have inferred that he lost his post, and was involved in his father's ruin, but perhaps he may be dimly indicated under the name of "Ahijah the Pelonite" (1 Chron. xi. 36). *Pelonî* in Hebrew means "so and so," like the Spanish *Don Fulano*.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. xi. 3. It is a somewhat suspicious circumstance, due perhaps to Jewish falsification, that in 1 Chron. iii. 5, Eliam is disguised into Ammiel, and Bathsheba into Bathshua. Bathshua is a heathen name. "The daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess" (1 Chron. ii. 3 ; Gen. xxxviii. 2-12).

<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 3.



heat of day, when he saw Bathsheba, who was "very beautiful to look upon," washing herself in a cistern on the top of her house. Forgetful of all his past, and of all that was due from him as God's anointed, he made Bathsheba the victim of his guilty passion. There is no need to detail the fresh crimes in which he was entangled by the desire to hide his guilt. His attempt at concealment was frustrated by the fine feeling and honourable firmness of his unsuspecting soldier,<sup>1</sup> and no way remained to escape the consequences of his misdoing except to plot the base murder of Uriah while he was fighting the king's battles before Rabbath-Ammon. David, whom God had chosen from the sheepfolds, to be the ruler of His people Israel, became the secret, treacherous assassin of his brave commander. The murder could only be carried out by making Joab his accomplice.

From that hour his peace was gone. It might have been said to him as to the chief in the great tragedy—

"Not poppy nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owd'st yesterday."

Joab, as commander-in-chief and nephew of the king, had already been too powerful for a subject, but from that time he became the complete controller of David's destiny, because he—and at first he alone—was master of his guilty secret. Ahitophel too, hitherto David's most trusted counsellor, was now secretly his enemy. He may not, at first, have been aware of the murder of Uriah, but he was the grandfather of the woman whom David had so foully wronged.<sup>2</sup>

That woman was the mother of King Solomon. The date of Solomon's birth cannot be ascertained with any certainty, because we do not know the age at which he ascended the throne.

<sup>1</sup> That Uriah had become a proselyte we infer from his language in 2 Sam. xi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Blunt's "Undesigned Coincidences," Pt. II. x. p. 145. Professor Blunt is usually credited with the first notice of this probability. It had, however, been pointed out in the commentary of David Qimchi, and he only quotes it from earlier expositors (see Grätz, "Gesch. d. Juden." i. 263). In 2 Sam. xv. 31, David's prayer that God would turn the counsel of Ahitophel to *foolishness* seems to be a play on his name, "brother of foolishness" (?), though his advice was regarded as an "oracle of God" 2 Sam. xvi. 23).



He speaks of himself indeed at that time as "a little child," but the expression is metaphorical, and is only used as the language of deep humility.<sup>1</sup> He succeeded to the crown in early manhood. If so, he was probably born not long after the year B.C. 1035 of the chronology which is most usually adopted, and which is, so far as we can discover, reasonably accurate.<sup>2</sup>

But before we leave the tragic circumstances which accompanied David's first introduction to the mother of Solomon, it is worth notice that the deadly wound which it inflicted on the king's conscience, and the indignation which it caused in the hearts of all to whom it became known, are proofs of that loftier morality and keener sense of sin which resulted from the Divine training of the Hebrew people. There were many of the surrounding nations among whom this crime of a brilliant and successful monarch would have been regarded as venial or indifferent. The subjects of a Pagan autocrat would have easily forgiven such an offence, and he would have found no difficulty in forgiving himself. Indeed it is doubtful whether any Egyptian or Assyrian subject would have ventured to inquire into circumstances which were surrounded with mystery and doubt. But "the eye of the Lord is ten thousand times brighter than the sun," and it was by a holy inspiration that His prophets had been taught to look on sin "with such a glance as strook Gehazi with leprosy, and Simon Magus with a curse." The gaze of Nathan pierced through the precautions which veiled the guilty secret of the king, and his voice—the voice of the king's own conscience, and of the conscience of all the nation—awoke the offender to that burst of heartfelt penitence which expressed itself in language never to be forgotten in the Penitential Psalms. The king's repentance was as signal as had been his crime.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxii. 5 ; xxix. 1. "Solomon my son is young and tender." But the same phrase is applied to Rehoboam, when he was forty-one (2 Chron. xii. 13 ; xiii. 7), unless that (סד) be a clerical error for *twenty-one* (כא).

<sup>2</sup> The systems of chronology vary. Ewald dates the reign of Solomon from 1025-986 ; Usher from 1017-977. Hales, Jackson, and Bunsen adopt other schemes.



# CHAPTER I.

## THE CHILDHOOD OF SOLOMON.

**Influences which surrounded the childhood of Solomon --His father—Evil effects of his fall—His family—Bathsheba—David's fondness for his children—The name Shelômôh—Jedidiah—Influence of Nathan—His retirement—Solomon comes to be secretly regarded as the heir to the throne—Claims of Absalom.**

THE brief sketch in the last chapter will suffice to show us some of the conditions of the Court and family into which Solomon was born.

His father was a king who, in many respects, had fallen from his high estate. The golden dawn and glorious noonday of his reign were over. He was no longer the pride and the idol of Israel and Judah. Not only had his administration ceased to be so vigorous as once it was, but the dark story of his relations to Bathsheba and Uriah was but an imperfect secret, and in proportion as it became known David lost ground in the affections of his people. There was, indeed, no concealment in the intensity of his remorse, and God forgave him, and restored to him the clean heart and the free spirit. But the forgiveness of sins is not the same thing as the remission of consequences, and the consequences of sin are moral and spiritual as well as physical. They leave their scars upon a man's character. Repentance is less strong and less beautiful than his elder brother Innocence. No man can stain his soul with such crimes as those of David, and remain unscathed thereafter. His powers of resistance are weakened ; his tranquillity becomes less secure. The intercourse of the boy Solomon with his father must have been intercourse with a gloomy and



saddened man, who was still capable indeed of flashes of his old nobleness, but whose recorded deeds show a marked deterioration from the splendid religious promise of his youth. He withdrew more and more into the pompous surroundings of a Court, and the voluptuous seclusion of the harem. His judicial duties were so much neglected as to give strength to the complaints and promises of Absalom. The spell of his early ascendancy was broken, and a deep indignation against him burned in many hearts. In a twofold way his evil example produced bitter fruit. On the one hand, it caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme ; on the other, it acted as a spiritual empoisonment in the hearts of all who were unstable. It broke down in many minds the altar of confidence in the reality of virtue, leading them to say, "If he is not good, no one is good." His sons inherited from him the legacy of imperious passions, and they had also before their eyes the fatal example of a weakness in the Reason and the Conscience which, in David if in any one, ought to have sufficed to keep those passions under firm control. The transgression of the monarch tended to lower the morality of the entire nation.

The influence of David over any of his sons now that he was weak and fallen, can hardly have been entirely beneficial, but it is probable that his intercourse with Solomon was small. Besides his daughters, David had at least twenty sons born of his numerous wives.<sup>1</sup> Following the bad custom of polygamy which had only been practised to a very small extent by the early patriarchs of his race, or by his immediate predecessor, he had two wives during his wanderings, five during his reign at Hebron, and an unknown number at Jerusalem, besides the harem of ten or more concubines which was regarded as an almost necessary appendage of Eastern royalty. The number of his family, and the mutual jealousies between the separate establishments, would naturally tend to diminish his intercourse with his sons ; nor is it the custom in the East for fathers to take much part in the early training of their children, however fondly they may be beloved. Polygamy necessarily tends to break down domestic affections.

To Bathsheba must have fallen the chief share in the educa-

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Sam. xxvii. 3 ; 2 Sam. iii. 2-5, v. 13-16 ; 1 Chron. iii. 5-8, xiv. 4-7. There were also sons of concubines who are not named (2 Sam. xv. 16 ; 1 Chron. iii. 2).



tion of her child, and it is impossible to suppose that her influence could have been very good. We know but little of her, but that little is almost wholly to her disadvantage. If her name was originally Bathshua<sup>1</sup> this may possibly imply that she was, in part at least, of heathen extraction; but whether this be so or not she must have had a deep share in David's guilt. In her son's reign, the young and beautiful maiden of Shunem could be faithful to her peasant lover in spite of the unequalled magnificence of the royal match which was so passionately pressed upon her.<sup>2</sup> Not so Bathsheba. She seems to have offered no resistance to the far graver crime of adultery committed against a most tender and faithful husband. She came to David in secret. She must have acquiesced, at least with silent complicity, in the base plot by which the king would fain have concealed his guilt; and to that plot she seems to have opposed no remonstrance. Of Uriah's murder she may have known nothing, but, if he was sacrificed without her cognizance at the time, she can hardly have remained unaware of that which afterwards, in Court circles at any rate, became an open secret. Yet she was so far from turning with abhorrence from the hands which were red with her husband's blood, that directly the legal period of mourning for Uriah was over, she was content to add one more to the discreditable number of David's wives. We may make every allowance for the different views of morality taken by Eastern peoples in ancient days, but the fact remains—Bathsheba had been a willing adulteress, and she continued to enjoy till death the earthly fruits of her transgression. There is no certainty, and little probability in the notion of the Rabbis that she was "the mother of King Lemuel," whose appeals to her son are preserved in the Thirty-first Chapter of Proverbs; but, if she were, those exhortations to chastity would have come with more weight from other lips.

According to the order of names in 1 Chron. iii. 5, Solomon was the *youngest* of five sons born to David and Bathsheba. The eldest—the child of the adultery—died in infancy. The

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> She is called the Shulamite, but Shunem was known as *Sulem* in the days of Eusebius and Jerome, and the village is now called *Solam*. See Robinson's "Researches in Palestine," vol. iii. p. 402. The only other Shunammite in Scripture is Elisha's hostess (2 Kings iv. 12).



other three were Shimea, Shobab, and Nathan, of whom the latter became the ancestor of Christ after the extinction of Solomon's line in the person of Jeconiah.<sup>1</sup> Possibly, however, Solomon's name may only be placed last by way of emphasis, for in 2 Sam. xii. it is implied that Solomon was born first of the sons of Bathsheba after her legal marriage, and this is also distinctly stated by Josephus.<sup>2</sup> David was a fond father to all his children, but the circumstances of Solomon's birth tended to make him specially dear to the rapidly-ageing king. He was the son of a mother passionately, if guiltily, beloved, and his birth came to fill up the void caused by the death of the first child. David would naturally regard his birth and survival as a proof that God in mercy had accepted his prayers, and seen his remorseful tears.

When Solomon was born, the kingdom was at peace. David had seen enough, and more than enough of war. The thought of all the blood which he had shed weighed heavily upon his conscience, and his enemies called him "a man of blood." His yearning for peace appears in the name Absalom—"Father of Peace"—which he had given long before to the son born to him in Hebron of Maacah, daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur. By this time it must have been still stronger, and he gave to his son by Bathsheba the stately name of Shelômôh, or "The Peaceful,"<sup>3</sup> the name which is still so common in the East in the form Suleimân.<sup>4</sup> Nathan was immediately informed of the auspicious birth, and the child was placed under his sponsorship and care.<sup>5</sup> He, too, hailed the birth

<sup>1</sup> Luke iii. 31. Salathiel, the direct descendant of Solomon and Bathsheba in the line of Nathan, was probably adopted by Jeconiah. Comp. Zech. xii. 12; and comp. 1 Chron. iii. 17; Jer. xxii. 30; Matt. i. 11, 12. Salathiel's real father was Neri (Luke iii. 27), of the house of Nathan. If "Assir" ("captive") was (as the Talmudists assert) a son of Jehoiachin, he died young, and the exiled king *adopted* his kinsman, Salathiel.

<sup>2</sup> "Antiq." vii. 7, 4.

<sup>3</sup> According to one reading in 2 Sam. xii. 24, Bathsheba conferred the name.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. the names Shelômith, Lev. xxiv. 11; 1 Chron. xxvi. 25; Shelômi, Numb. xxxiv. 27. So Frederick is *Friedereich*, "rich in peace." We speak of Solômon because the New Testament and Josephus translated *Shelô-moh* not by Σαλωμών as is done by the LXX., but by Σολομών. The long vowel is retained in Salôme.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 25. The verse may either mean—"He (David) sent him (the



of the child as a sign that God had restored to David the favour which had been promised to his repentance. He therefore gave to Solomon, "because of Jehovah," the more sacred name of Jedidiah—"Beloved of Jah."<sup>1</sup> David himself had been called by a name which meant "The Beloved," "The Darling"; but to Solomon the prophet desired to give a name expressive of something deeper than family affection.<sup>2</sup> This name, however, is never again referred to, for it was not meant to be used in common life. The name Solomon was like a prophetic intimation of the ideal and the history of the magnificent unwarlike king.<sup>3</sup>

In Nathan we might have expected that the boy would have had a pure, wise, and faithful teacher; and such, we may trust, was to some extent the case. But it is impossible to overlook the fact that, after his one exhibition of fearless faithfulness, Nathan seems to have sunk into comparative apathy. He lived till Solomon's accession certainly, and perhaps late into the reign, of which he wrote the earlier annals.<sup>4</sup> If the Jewish tradition mentioned by Jerome be correct, Nathan was the eighth, perhaps the adopted, son of Jesse,<sup>5</sup> and the same as the warrior Jonathan, who is called David's "uncle" in 2 Sam. xxi. 21.<sup>6</sup> He has also been identified with the Nathan whose sons occupied high places in Solomon's Court,—one of them, Zabud, being "The King's Friend," and also "Priest."<sup>7</sup> But the father of these

child) into the hand of Nathan;" or "He sent by the hand of Nathan," *i.e.*, as Ewald (iii. 168) explained it "entreated the oracle through Nathan, to confer on the new-born child some name of lofty import;" or even "He (Jehovah) sent by the hand of Nathan." Comp. 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Amabilis Domino. Comp. Lemuel, Jonathan, Nathanael, Adeodatus, Diodorus, Theodore, Gottlieb, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Ps. cxxvii. 2. "So every Muhammedan, besides his so-called baptismal names, may have an additional name of loftier significance ending in *eldîn*, which signifies the man in his religious capacity" (Ewald, iii. 165: comp. Noor-ed-Din, Saleh-ed-Din, &c.).

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. ix. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Jerome, "Qu. Hebr.;" 1 Sam. xvii. 12; 1 Chron. ii. 13-15.

<sup>6</sup> It is more probable that "uncle" in 1 Chron. xxvii. 32 is a mistake for "nephew," the mistake arising from a wrong punctuation of 2 Sam. xxi. 21. This Jonathan is described as a wise man, a scribe, and David's counsellor.

<sup>7</sup> It does not follow that this Nathan was of Aaronic descent. for David's



officials was more probably the younger brother of Solomon. The prophet Nathan himself did not continue to play any memorable part in the religious service of the people. After Solomon's accession his name is not mentioned, and although David consulted him about the building of the Temple, and the organization of public worship, we do not hear of his voice being raised in any of the crimes and tumults which marked the closing years of the hero-king. It was Gad the seer, not Nathan the prophet, who warned David of the punishment which would follow the guilty pride—possibly the tyrannous purpose of levying a poll-tax or conscription—which had induced him to number the people in defiance of the wishes of his wisest counsellors.<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, we could attach any importance to a confused fragment of the Greek historian, Eupolemus, Nathan may have had some message for David during the three years' pestilence.<sup>2</sup> But Eupolemus confuses different events, and if the census had any reference to the system of collecting funds for the future Temple, Nathan may have persuaded himself that the measure was justifiable. Possibly the weight of advancing years may have impaired his energy, but to him we must still attribute the best of the influences which surrounded the life of the youthful prince. Himself trained in the School of the Prophets, he must have instructed Solomon in all the poetry, the "wisdom of the East," and the historical literature of his nation, and especially in whatever portions of the Mosaic law were then committed to writing. The literary capacities which Solomon had inherited from his father must have received a careful cultivation, although they assumed a

sons are also called priests (2 Sam. viii. 18), and even Ira (2 Sam. xx. 26). By the time the Books of Chronicles were written there was some feeling against the union of civil and ecclesiastical offices, and instead of "kohen," "priest," they have "chief at the hand of the king." The LXX. render the name *αὐλάρχαι* in the case of David's sons, and the Authorized Version "officers," while the Vulgate honestly gives *sacerdotes*, and the Revised Version "priests," as well as Luther and Coverdale. See Ewald, "Alterthümsk.," p. 276.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xxiv. 1-25; 1 Chron. xxi. 1-7, xxvii. 23, 24.

<sup>2</sup> The passage is preserved in Eusebius, "Præp. Ev." ix. 30, "An angel pointed David the place where the Temple was to be, but forbade him to build it, as being stained with blood, and having fought many wars. His name was *Dianathan*." The blundering name is taken apparently from the *διὰ Νάθαν* in the LXX. Version. See 2 Sam. vii. and 1 Chron. xxii.



different development from that which has immortalized the name of David as "the sweet Psalmist of Israel."

Though Solomon was the first Jewish king "born in the purple," it is by no means certain that he had been destined from the first to be David's heir. The old king may have felt the same reluctance to name his successor as has been felt by other great sovereigns ; and to nominate an infant or a young boy would be dangerous. It is not till the time of Adonijah's rebellion that we hear of an oath to Bathsheba that her son should succeed to the throne,<sup>1</sup> and as there is no independent mention of that oath we do not know at what period it was given. It was felt indeed that the king's nomination was one of the most powerful factors in a claim to the throne, but the nomination could hardly be arbitrary. The murder of Amnon, David's eldest son, took place when Solomon was a child. Of the second son, Chileab or Daniel, we hear no more, and it is probable that he died early. Of the remaining sons, Absalom was the eldest. He certainly regarded himself as the intended heir. Not only was David already a king when Absalom was born at Hebron, but the youth was of royal descent on both sides, since his mother Maacah was a daughter of the king of Geshur. He was also strong in the admiration of the multitude, and in the passionate affection which his father entertained for him. When Absalom perished in battle against his father, Adonijah, the eldest surviving son, regarded his own claims as valid. Next in order to Adonijah were at least twelve sons of whom we know next to nothing, and who may have been excluded either from the lack of any commanding qualities, or because their mothers were of private and undistinguished families.<sup>2</sup> The promise to Bathsheba may have been one of the whispered secrets of the palace, but it does not seem to have been generally

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings i. 13, 17.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam. iii. 1-5, we have six sons of David mentioned—Amnon, Chileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream ; in 1 Chron. iii. 1-9 we have (if the text be correct) besides these (Daniel being put for Chileab) Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Elishama, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Eliada ; besides the sons of the concubines, and Tamar. A similar list, with variations, occurs in 2 Sam. v. 14-16 ; and in 1 Chron. xiv. 3-7, where Ibhar is put next to Solomon. Besides these we have a Jerimoth in 2 Chron. xi. 18, whose daughter Mahalath was married to Rehoboam. Josephus ("Antiq." vii. 3, § 3) gives a totally different list of eleven sons. Some of them became "priests" (2 Sam. viii. 18, Authorized Version "chief rulers").

known. It would be unfair to ascribe it solely to the ascendancy which Bathsheba had acquired over the mind of the uxorious king. Solomon early displayed the capacity which marked him as conspicuously superior to all his brethren. It was clear to all "that the Lord loved him."<sup>1</sup> David's insight in choosing him to be his heir had received the prophetic approval of Nathan. But however early this design was formed, there was an obvious wisdom in confining the knowledge of the secret to a few. To make it generally known while Solomon was a child would have been to awaken the turbulent jealousies of his powerful and unscrupulous rivals, and to mark him out for almost certain destruction. It must have early become clear that such men as Amnon and Absalom and Adonijah—men of fierce passions and haughty temperament—would be singularly unfitted to carry out the peaceful and religious designs which David wished to bequeath to his successor. The promise of calm wisdom and stately demeanour which marked the childhood of Solomon,<sup>2</sup> combined with David's passionate devotion to Bathsheba to make him pass over the pretensions of his elder sons, and with the approval of his truest religious adviser, to swear by the name of Jehovah, "Assuredly Solomon my son shall reign after me."

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Wisd. viii. 19, "But I was a clever child, and received a good soul."



## CHAPTER II.

### THE YOUTH OF SOLOMON.

Troubles of the period—The crime of Amnon—David's supineness—Absalom's revenge—His flight, return, and forgiveness—His ambition—His rebellion—Ahitophel—David's flight from Jerusalem—His impotent resentment against Joab—The murder of Amasa—Solomon learns who are the friends and the enemies of his house—Intestine quarrels—The numbering of the people—Dislike of the measure and its imperfect results—The pestilence—The vision on the threshing-floor of Araunah.

THE youth of Solomon fell in a dark and troubled period, during which the sins and errors of David were bringing about their natural retribution.

The first event which shocked the nation and rent the king's heart was the horrible misconduct of his eldest son Amnon, who had been born to him during his days as a fugitive, by his first wife Ahinoam of Jezreel. There is no need to detail one of the foulest incidents which sully the sacred page. It is not often that the fierce light of history burns into the secrets of an Eastern palace, but, in this instance, it reveals a state of things truly shocking. Violent and insolent as his ancestor Reuben, this first-born of David did not allow the Mosaic law to restrain the growth of his ungovernable passion for his half-sister Tamar.<sup>1</sup> Aided by the cunning of his cousin Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, he accomplished his purpose, and then, with a

<sup>1</sup> Grätz ("Gesch. d. Juden." i. 264) assumes, without a shadow of proof, that Tamar was a daughter of Maacah by an earlier marriage, so that there was no blood-relationship between her and Amnon. A man guilty of conduct so atrocious as that of Amnon would hardly be hindered by *any* barrier.



sudden revulsion of feeling, rendered his crime yet more detestable by driving the maiden from him with pitiless brutality. His conduct can only be accounted for by the glare of unnatural horror often flung by a guilty conscience when a deed of shame is done. With her "sleeved upper garment"<sup>1</sup> rent, and ashes on her head, the dishonoured princess fled to her own brother Absalom, uttering loud cries of despair. He, with a deeply-seated purpose of revenge bade her to dissemble her anguish as he dissembled his own rage, and to remain in her palace quiet though desolate. Under such circumstances it was David's duty<sup>2</sup> to see that punishment fell on the head of the atrocious criminal. But David, like Eli, yielded to a foolish fondness for his son, and spared to bring him to justice because he was his first-born, and he did not like "to vex his soul."<sup>3</sup> He was "very wroth," but he did nothing.

But if the king would do nothing, Absalom determined that due vengeance should wipe out the shame of incest and outrage.<sup>4</sup> He nursed his wrath, and said nothing to Amnon. He was sullenly waiting for the opportunity which was sure to rise when suspicion had been lulled to sleep. After two years had elapsed he made "a feast like the feast of a king"<sup>5</sup> at Baal-Hazor, near the little town of Ephraim—the hamlet in which our Lord took refuge after His excommunication by the Priests.<sup>6</sup> Sheep-shearings were recognized seasons of festivity,<sup>7</sup> and it was quite in accordance with Absalom's known character, that he should desire to make the occasion as splendid as possible. He, therefore, invited the king and the princes to be present at the celebration. David, as Absalom no doubt had expected, declined to go in person, on the plea that his visit would involve Absalom in great expense; but he permitted all the king's sons to go. It seems to have been regarded as a matter of course that Amnon would not be invited; but when David

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xiii. 18. It was her dress as a princess (comp. Gen. xxxvii. 3).

<sup>2</sup> See Levit. xx. 17.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. xiii. 21. LXX.

<sup>4</sup> It is a touching sign of Absalom's affection for his dishonoured sister that he called his own daughter after her—Tamar (2 Sam. xiv. 27).

<sup>5</sup> 2 Sam. xiii. 27. LXX.

<sup>6</sup> This cannot be regarded as certain. The words mean, according to Ewald, "on the borders of the tribe of Ephraim." A various reading is "the valley of Rephaim."

<sup>7</sup> Gen. xxxviii. 12, 13; 1 Sam. xxv. 4, 36.



had refused the invitation, and contented himself with blessing Absalom, there was a plausible excuse for asking permission that the eldest son, the presumptive heir to the throne, should be present as David's representative. It was not without misgiving that the king granted the request, for hatred is not easily concealed, and David was aware of his own neglect, and of the deadliness of Amnon's offence. But he could never resist the subtle fascination of Absalom's appeals, and disguising his suspicion he gave a reluctant assent. Revenge was now within Absalom's reach. He ordered his servants to wait till Amnon was flushed with wine, and then fearlessly to murder him, promising them the protection of his position and influence. The murder was accomplished. The banquet broke up in wild confusion, and the terrible news was brought to Jerusalem that all the princes were slain. In that awful moment as amid his wailing courtiers he grovelled in the dust with rent clothes, and recognized the fatal similitude to his own crime in these deeds of lust and blood, the iron must indeed have entered deep into David's soul.

His nephew, the subtle Jonadab, removed the most overwhelming part of his anguish by assuring him that Absalom could only have killed Amnon. He had read the secret of Absalom's revenge in his face, as he read the secret of Amnon's lawless passion. The appearance of the king's sons on their mules, all weeping bitterly, confirmed the surmise of Jonadab. But the facts were still sufficiently terrible. Dark spirits were walking in the house of the Psalmist of Israel. A brother had outraged his sister, and had fallen by his brother's hand.

Absalom was now the heir, and though his father had never said him nay he did not venture to appear before the deeply-incensed king, but fled to the Court of his maternal grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshur. There he remained in exile for three years. For a year David continued to wear mourning for Amnon, and then his heart began to go forth once more to his banished son.<sup>1</sup> Joab, loyal to his master in every respect so long as he was left undisturbed in the command of the army, read the king's hidden yearning, and by the device of the widow of Tekoah, induced him to recall Absalom. Perhaps his conduct in the matter was not quite so disinterested as it looked. Ab-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xiv. 1. Dr. Edersheim and others render it "the king's heart was *against* Absalom" (comp. Dan. xi. 28).



salom, at any rate, had ulterior designs. In murdering Amnon he had borne in mind that his brother's removal left his path clear to the throne, and he relied for success on his own prowess, cunning, and popularity, supported as they were by his father's boundless pride in his beauty. It probably never occurred to him to regard Solomon as an obstacle in his way. The kingdom needed a strong ruler, and being in the prime of life he would not have feared that his wishes could be thwarted by an inconspicuous child, the son of a mother of no importance. He had been forbidden to see his father's face, and this was the condition of his return. It was, however, essential to his plans that there should be an open reconciliation between his father and himself, and he had not the least doubt that this could be assured if once the king could be induced to permit him to enter his presence. Five years had now elapsed since the tragedy at Baal-Hazor, and he thought that it was time for the condonation of a fratricide, which he defended by his duty as an avenger. He sent for Joab twice, but Joab was afraid or unwilling to visit a prince who was in disgrace. With characteristic insolence he therefore ordered his servants to set Joab's barley-field on fire, and when the rude soldier came to demand compensation he vehemently reproached him with having brought him back from Geshur to no purpose. Joab accordingly used his irresistible influence to bring about an interview between David and his son, and it ended, as Absalom had expected, in his father's extending to him full forgiveness, ratified by a kiss of peace.

He might now have felt assured that he would succeed to the throne, but his impetuous vanity and ambition would not suffer him to await his father's death. His position as the king's eldest son enabled him to surround himself with chariots and horsemen and a bodyguard, and he also deliberately set himself to create a popular movement in his own favour. In this base plot he was aided not only by his own peerless beauty, an influence doubly powerful in Eastern countries, but also by the growing remissness of the king's old age, and possibly of his long illness. He gradually got round himself a powerful party, and the conspiracy grew stronger every day, while the king, rarely leaving the precincts of his palace, remained in unsuspecting security. For four years, with unsleeping assiduity, he set himself to steal away the hearts of the people



by blandishments and bribes. At last the time seemed ripe for throwing off the mask.<sup>1</sup> David's rule had in some way alienated his own tribe of Judah, and the disaffection was particularly strong in his early capital of Hebron. The inhabitants of that old and sacred city perhaps looked with jealousy on the growing glories of Jerusalem by which they had been so totally thrown into the shade. Absalom, under pretence of a vow, asked leave to sacrifice at Hebron, and went thither with two hundred followers, from whom he had concealed his designs. But no sooner was he safe in Hebron, than he sent for Ahitophel, whose wisdom had secured him the high post of the king's counsellor, and whose counsel was revered in those days like an oracle of God. Now, Ahitophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and it is difficult to imagine that he would have joined Absalom if he had been aware that his own great-grandson was David's destined successor. It is indeed possible that ambition may have been suppressed by the sterner passion of revenge. Like Absalom himself he may have nursed, during many years, a secret wrath for Bathsheba's dishonour. His motives must be only a matter of conjecture; but as his grand-daughter was now the king's favourite wife, and the mother of four of his sons, his defection is, at any rate, a clear sign of David's waning popularity.

On receiving the news of this formidable revolt, David immediately decided to leave Jerusalem until he should have gathered a sufficient force to fight against his son's adherents. He took with him all his wives and sons, only leaving ten concubines to look after the royal abodes. Bathsheba and her young son must therefore have been with him during that long and tragic day, so full of heart-shaking scenes, which is described at greater length than any other day in the whole Bible. Perhaps they stood by David's side under the olive-tree by the last house in the suburbs of Jerusalem, on the edge of the dark Kidron, while the soldiers and people defiled past him. On the sensitive mind of a boy those scenes must have left a deep impression, and they also taught him the friends on whom he could

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. xv. 7 it is clear that the true reading is, "It came to pass after *four* (not *forty*) years." This is the reading of the Peshito, the Vulgate, Josephus, and most modern critics. The conduct of Absalom was like that of Agamemnon (Euripides, "*Iphig.*" 337 *sqq.*) and Bolingbroke (Shakespeare, "*Richard II.*," act v. sc. ii.).



most securely rely. For without the aid of the mercenary and alien bodyguard known as Cherethites, Pelethites,<sup>1</sup> and Gittites David must have been crushed at once. They were under the command of Benaiah and Ittai of Gath, and they acted in concert with a body of six hundred, the little nucleus of the first standing army known to the Hebrews. The whole force was popularly spoken of as the *Gibborim* or Heroes, a name which properly belonged only to those who had shown distinguished prowess.<sup>2</sup> Of the priests, Zadok was conspicuous for loyalty, and his reputation as a seer added greatly to David's strength. Abiathar also remained faithful, but he is mentioned after Zadok, though he was older and had the precedence in religious rank, and he seems to have shown tardiness in taking the final decision.<sup>3</sup> Hushai the Archite,<sup>4</sup> David's "friend," and perhaps, like Ittai, of alien race, was also faithful. With rent garments

<sup>1</sup> The origin of these names is disputed. Ewald and Hitzig (following the LXX. in Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5) regard them as Cretans (comp. Tacitus, "Hist." v. 2, but see 1 Sam. xxx. 14), and Philistines; but Gesenius, Thenius, and Keil think that they are the names of officers, "executioners (2 Kings xi. 4) and couriers" (1 Kings xiv. 28), from כרת "to slay," and פלל "to run." Josephus calls them *σωματοφύλακες* (2 Sam. xxiii. 23). In 2 Sam. xx. 23 and 2 Kings xi. 4 the word rendered in our Authorized Version by "Cherethites" and "captains" is really כרי, perhaps "Carians."

<sup>2</sup> The word "Gittites" in 1 Sam. xv. 18 should probably be "Gibborim" or "Heroes," as in xvi. 6. This is the reading of the LXX. Grätz ("Gesch. d. Juden." i. 270) thinks that Ittai and the mercenary force had been got together (evidently but a short time before the rebellion, 2 Sam. xv. 19) to overawe the designs of the Tanite Pharaoh Psusennes (?) on the domains of Geshur. It has been conjectured that by "Gittites" are meant soldiers who had served under David in old days at Gath.

<sup>3</sup> He "*stood still*" (according to the conjectural reading) until all the people had streamed out of the city, whereas Zadok and his Levites had at once taken out the Ark to accompany David (2 Sam. xv. 24). But the meaning of the passage is not quite clear. It may be that Abiathar had accompanied Zadok with the Ark, and that his name has dropped out of 2 Sam. xv. 24 (of which there is a very possible trace in the LXX. reading ἀπὸ Βαιθάε), and that Abiathar stood still (comp. Josh. iii. 17) with the king under the olive-tree (LXX.), by "the last house" (2 Sam. xv. 17, Hebr.), while the Ark was motionless until all the people had passed.

<sup>4</sup> This title is of uncertain meaning. It might mean "from the town of Erek," but no town of that name is known. Perhaps the Archites, like the Jebusites, &c., were the remnant of some aboriginal tribe of Palestine. Josephus, with a strange play on the word, calls him ἀρχισταῖρος, "chief of the companions."



and ashes on his head, he joined David at the little oratory (*proseucha*) on the top of the Mount of Olives (2 Sam. xv. 32, Hebr.). Mephibosheth, still perhaps brooding over the miserable fate of Saul and his house, and the bloody end of so many of his brethren, seems to have been lukewarm at the best, but his powerful agent, Ziba, made up for this remissness of the last surviving son of the friend of David's youth. Joab also and his brother Abishai remained loyal to their uncle and old master, and shared with Ittai the command of the forces. On the other side of the Jordan three powerful and generous sheykhs, Shobi, the son of Nahash, who had survived the destruction of his native Rabbah,<sup>1</sup> Machir of Lo-debar, and the aged Gileadite, Barzillai, rendered to the fugitive king an invaluable service. The friends who thus rallied round David were, with few exceptions, the friends and partisans of Solomon at a later period.

It is needless to follow the story of Absalom's rebellion, defeat, and death.<sup>2</sup> The king's impolitic outburst of sorrow at the news of his son's death shows how easy it would have been for Absalom to have succeeded but for his own headstrong folly. His murder—for it was nothing else, though Joab may have thought it justifiable—left no real competitor between Solomon and the throne.<sup>3</sup>

Solomon was already of an impressionable age, and the events of this rebellion must have taught him much. Among other things he must have perceived the dangerous power of Joab and the reckless use which he made of it. His language to the king was even insolent in its tone of menace, and David in his resentment superseded him in his command, and placed Amasa—another of his nephews—in his place. The resentment was perfectly impotent. Joab, master of David's secrets, was master of David's fate. He had made himself indispensable, and he

<sup>1</sup> He may have been a brother of the insulting Hanun, and as Nahash had been a firm friend, and perhaps a kinsman, of David, David may have made him "chief" (*δυναστής*, Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 9, § 8) of the Ammonite country in his brother's place.

<sup>2</sup> It has been supposed that in Psalms iii., xxxix., xli., lv., lxii., lxiii., we have allusions to the circumstances of Absalom's conspiracy.

<sup>3</sup> The *mode* of Absalom's murder seems to have been exceptionally cruel. Joab transfixed him with three wooden *staves*, and left his armour-bearers to kill him. He had old grudges to satisfy.



gave David plainly to understand that, while he would be faithful in all other respects, he did not mean to be cashiered from his command. His brutal murder of Amasa caused a shock of disgust, and men remembered long afterwards his horrible appearance as he went in pursuit of Sheba with his girdle and all his garments down to his sandals soaked in his murdered cousin's blood.<sup>1</sup> Yet David did not dare to punish him! There had been an obvious injustice and feeble impolicy in the appointment of Amasa, a rebel and the son of an Ishmaelite,<sup>2</sup> over the head of the very commander who had just defeated him in the king's battle. Indeed, Amasa at once proved his own incompetence, and Joab, by bringing the rebellion of Sheba to a speedy and successful issue, placed himself beyond the reach of David's anger. The manner of Amasa's murder had been craftily made to wear the appearance of an accident, and perhaps this furnished David with an excuse for not bringing to justice a kinsman who had fought for him for so many years, and had become far too powerful for his control. He hates him, he feels his dependence on him, he is afraid of him, curses him again and again, tries to get rid of him, yet, in spite of the murders of Abner and Amasa, always kept him at hand, and finally commands his son to punish the servant whom he feared to touch himself.<sup>3</sup>

Again, Solomon must have perceived that the animosities of the house of Saul still smouldered beneath the surface. The curses heaped upon David in his hour of shame by Shimei, son of Gerar, who was of Saul's family, showed that there were still many adherents of the old royal house. He followed David to curse him as the murderer of his race, and never stopped his curses till the king and his followers had reached a spot which perhaps from this circumstance received the pathetic name of Aye-phim—"the place of the weary."<sup>4</sup> David had certainly behaved with generosity to the descendants of his former master, and especially to Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. The guilt—for so it was regarded at the time<sup>5</sup>—of the execution of Saul's seven sons and grandsons—five sons of his daughter Merab,<sup>6</sup> and two

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. xvii. 25, Hebr. ; comp. 1 Chron. ii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> See Oort, "Bible for Young People," iii. 87 (E. tr.).

<sup>4</sup> See 2 Sam. xvi. 14 (the probable reading).

<sup>5</sup> 2 Sam. xvi. 7.

<sup>6</sup> So we should read in 2 Sam. xxi. 8



of his sons by Rizpah—must fall not upon David, but upon the priesthood who furnished David with the answers of the oracle, and on the Gibeonites who demanded this horrible expiation by human sacrifice. But the lonely anguish of Rizpah, as, for month after month, in burning heat and searching cold, seated on sackcloth upon the rocks, she scared the vultures and the jackals from the crosses on which hung the blackened and shrivelled bodies of her two sons—

“Dead in the dim and lion-haunted ways,”

had awakened a deep sympathy, and the action of Mephibosheth himself in not joining the faithful soldiers and courtiers who left Jerusalem with David seems to show that a reaction in favour of Saul's house was not deemed impossible even then. Ziba, at any rate, charged his master with cherishing secret hopes of the overthrow of David, and although Mephibosheth excused his tardiness by the fact that he was lame, it has been said that the excuse was as lame as he who offered it.<sup>1</sup> Solomon's later policy towards Joab and Shimei and Abiathar was probably influenced by all that he had seen and heard, when, as a boy, he stood with his father under the olive-tree beside the Ark, and accompanied his mother Bathsheba on that long day of flight and weeping up the slopes of Olivet and down the deep valley into the wilderness of Jordan.

He must also have learnt that the kingdom was still far from consolidated. The furious quarrel between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, and the revolt of Sheba the Benjamite from the mountains of Ephraim, showed that tribal jealousies could at any moment be fanned into a flame. The tribe of Ephraim could not acquiesce in the loss of its old pre-eminence; the men of Benjamin could not readily forget that the first monarch of Israel had been one of themselves.

Another great calamity broke the returning peace of David's later years. It was the numbering of the people and the pestilence, which was regarded by the national conscience as the punishment for this offence.

<sup>1</sup> It must however be admitted that later Jewish sentiment condemned the act as hasty and unfair. “In the hour when David said, ‘Thou and Ziba divide the land,’ a *Bath Kol* (voice from heaven) came forth and said to him, ‘Rehoboam and Jeroboam shall divide the kingdom’” (Talmud, Shabbath, 56. 2, quoted by Dr. Edersheim, “Bible History,” v. 31).



This passage of David's history is surrounded by obscurities, for we are not told his exact motive.

There could have been nothing sinful in the mere wish to ascertain the numbers of the population, and the statistics of its various elements. The growth and organization of the kingdom rendered such a step desirable. Possibly, also, David was in dread of an Egyptian encroachment on his southern territories, and may have felt it necessary to be prepared for war.<sup>1</sup> Solomon in his reign carried out the census more completely, and no pestilence followed, and no blame is attached to him. Moses had thrice been ordered to take a census of the Israelites in the wilderness, partly in order to ascertain the number of the fighting men.<sup>2</sup> But in Exod. xxx. 12 we find a command never to number the people without requiring of every man half a shekel as atonement-money, which was to be for every man "a ransom for his soul unto the Lord," for the express reason "*that there may be no plague among them* when thou numberest them." David exacted no atonement-money, and may not even have been aware of this law. It is clear, however, that the census—or its unavowed motives—was repugnant to the general feeling. Joab and his officers ventured to dissuade the king from his purpose, but they counselled in vain. The mass of the people shared Joab's sentiments, because they disliked so prominent an assertion of regal power. They looked on the census as an ill-omened expedient of worldly policy, and its results were not even entered in the official chronicles.<sup>3</sup> The historians ascribe the impulse to "the anger of the Lord," and to "a Satan," and Joab did the work both tardily and imperfectly.<sup>4</sup> At the end of nine months and twenty days he informed David that the effective military force of Israel numbered 800,000 men, and of Judah, 500,000.<sup>5</sup> The tribe of Levi was omitted from the census

<sup>1</sup> The little raid of the Egyptians on Gezer (1 Kings ix. 16) is not definitely dated, and may have occurred before David's death. It was only Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter which robbed it of its threatening character, for Gezer was a Canaanite city on the lower border of Ephraim. The site of Gezer has very recently been identified at *Abu Shushéh*, also called Tell-el-Gezer, between Ramleh and Jerusalem (L. Oliphant, "Haifa," p. 253).

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxxviii. 26; Numb. i. 2, 3, xxvi. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xxiv. 1; 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Chron. xxi. 5, 6; xxvii. 24.

<sup>5</sup> In 1 Chron. xxi. 5 we have the astounding total numbers of 1,100,000 for Israel, and 470,000 fighting men for Judah.



as a matter of course, in accordance with the ancient precedent,<sup>1</sup> but the Chronicler says that Joab also purposely omitted to number the tribe of Benjamin, because "the king's word was abominable to him,"<sup>2</sup> and that he did not include those who were under twenty years of age.<sup>3</sup> He seems to have thought that by thus frustrating David's purpose he might avert the calamitous retribution which was expected by the religious sense of the nation. Of that feeling Gad became the spokesman, and David, having already experienced three years' famine,<sup>4</sup> and three months' flight from his enemies, has now to suffer the misery of a three days' pestilence.<sup>5</sup> His conscience, though often tardy in its action, was never seared, and he admitted that he had sinned a grievous sin, for which he implored forgiveness. The "death" raged the appointed time, and had slain 77,000 victims, when David saw the vision of the Destroying Angel, with his sword outstretched over Jerusalem, standing by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.<sup>6</sup> The king's prayer of agonized remorse was heard, and the plague was stayed. The same day the seer came to David, and bad him to rear an altar on the threshing-floor and offer burnt-offerings. From that time David used to sacrifice on the spot hallowed by such tremendous associations. It became the site of the future altar of burnt-offering in the Temple of Solomon,<sup>7</sup> and its consecration added another impulse to the growing desire to centralize in the capital the religious worship of the entire nation.

<sup>1</sup> Numb. i. 47-49.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. xxi. 6. Comp. Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 13, § 1.

<sup>3</sup> The reason given, "because the Lord had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens," shows how many current feelings were offended by David's census. There is still throughout the East a superstitious prejudice against all numberings, as being calculated to provoke a jealous Nemesis (Niebuhr, "Descr. de l'Arabie," p. 14).

<sup>4</sup> 1 Chron. xxi. 12.

<sup>5</sup> But according to one explanation of 2 Sam. xxiv. 15 the pestilence was shortened and only lasted from morning till noon (LXX., Peshito), or "till the time of the evening sacrifice."

<sup>6</sup> 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. The true rendering is, "All this did Araunah the king give unto the king"—in which case we must suppose that Araunah belonged to the old royal race of Jebus; or, as in the Revised Version, "All this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king."

<sup>7</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 1.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE ACCESSION OF SOLOMON.

**Feebleness of David's age—Abishag of Shunem—Conspiracy of Adonijah—His adherents—His attempted coronation feast—Adherents of Solomon—Counter efforts of Nathan and Bathsheba—Interviews of David with Bathsheba and Nathan—David rouses himself, and orders Solomon to be anointed and crowned—Popular enthusiasm—Collapse of Adonijah's plot—Terror of his guests—He is magnanimously pardoned—General amnesty—David's last song, and death—His dying directions to Solomon—His burial.**

THE infirmities of old age came rapidly on one whose days from his youth upwards had been passed in hardships, battles, and anxious labours. At the age of thirty he had been chosen king in Hebron, and he had reigned there for seven and a half years. He had reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem. He was not, therefore, much more than seventy,<sup>1</sup> and in modern times many men at that age are full of vigour. But the Jews at this period rarely outlived the threescore years and ten of man's allotted time. Indeed, Solomon and Manasseh were the only kings of Judah who survived the age of sixty; and in Solomon's case, it is not even certain that he reached that age.

David was already bedridden, and the vital force was so much exhausted that he could get no warmth from the clothes heaped upon him. His attendants knew no better plan for him than to provide a nurse, fair and young, who might tend and cherish him.<sup>2</sup> Their choice fell upon the beautiful Abishag of

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 15, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus ("Antiq." vii. 14, § 3) says that this was the advice of his physicians. It is recommended by Galen ("Method. Medic." viii. 7), and this



Shunem, a little town of Issachar on the southern slopes of little Hermon.<sup>1</sup> It is singular that, even for this subordinate and humble purpose, they thought it necessary to search out the loveliest maiden whom they could find in all the coasts of Israel.

Another of David's vain, ambitious, unruly sons determined to seize the opportunity for usurpation which was opened to him by his father's increasing feebleness. Now that Amnon and Absalom were dead, Adonijah, the eldest surviving prince, entered into a conspiracy to forestall his father's death and to seize the kingdom. In personal gifts, as in recklessness of character, he resembled his two elder brothers, and he was undeterred by the warning of their fate. Like Absalom, beautiful and bad, he had been born while David was king at Hebron; but as the name of his mother—Haggith—means "a dancer," we may conjecture that she was a person of inferior rank to Maacah of Geshur, and Ahinoam of Jezreel. But Adonijah, as well as his elder brothers, had been puffed up by the admiration and undue leniency of his father, who "had not displeased him at any time by saying, Why hast thou done so?" His first step was to imitate Absalom by providing himself with chariots, horsemen, and fifty runners. His next step was to secure two adherents who stood in the highest offices of Church and State—Joab, the commander of the army, and Abiathar, the high priest. Strange to say, he succeeded in winning over both these great officials to his side. Either they were unaware of the choice of Solomon to be David's successor, or they preferred the beauty and strength of a young man of thirty-five—who might now claim the rights of primogeniture—to that of one who had scarcely emerged from the seclusion of the harem and was little more than a boy. They might also have thought that their adhesion to the plot would secure its triumph, seeing the decrepitude into which David had now sunk. Jealousy may also have had its part in their motives. Joab could hardly fail to observe that Benaiah had superseded him in the con-

method of giving warmth was adopted till long after the Middle Ages. Reinhard, "*Bibelkrankh. d. A. Test.*," p. 171, mentions that a similar plan was recommended to Frederic Barbarossa.

<sup>1</sup> It is three and a half miles north of Jezreel. The Syriac and Arabic versions read "Sulamite" here, as in Cant. vi. 13, "Oh Shulamite." On the identity of the two names Gesenius and Fürst are agreed.



fidence of the king, and Abiathar, the sole survivor of a household slain for David's sake, the faithful companion of David's wanderings and of his reign at Hebron,<sup>1</sup> could hardly have looked with complacency on the growing influence of Zadok. Or had Adonijah promised both of them an amnesty for past crimes and past slackness as the price of their adhesion? Both of them, it must be remembered, but especially Joab, had good reason to dread the beginning of a new reign, unless the new king were bound to them by the closest obligations.

Strengthened by the support of two such followers, Adonijah threw off the mask, and—once more in imitation of Absalom's methods—invited all the princes except Solomon, and "all the men of Judah, the king's servants,"<sup>2</sup> to a great banquet. He evidently reckoned on the tribal jealousy which made Absalom fix upon Hebron as the headquarters of his revolt. The actual spot which Adonijah selected for his coronation-sacrifice was "the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En-rogel." Nothing is known about this "stone of the serpent," one of the many *Ebens* with which Palestine abounds, and which probably possessed a sacred character. A spring of water would be necessary for the occasion, but we only know that En-rogel, "the fullers' fountain," lay at the south-east, on the boundary line between Judah and Benjamin,<sup>3</sup> and therefore in the close vicinity of Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> It may perhaps be identified with the Fountain of the Virgin, opposite the village of Siloam.<sup>5</sup>

But Adonijah, in his contempt for the failing powers of his father, had not taken sufficient account of the weight of influence opposed to his pretensions. Zadok, the younger and more popular priest, and descendant of the older line of Aaron's family, was on the side of Solomon,<sup>6</sup> and was supported by

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. ii. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings i. 9. In verse 25 we have instead, "all the captains of the host." Abishai was probably dead.

<sup>3</sup> Josh. xv. 7; xviii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> It was a well-known spot (Josh. xv. 7; xviii. 16). In Absalom's rebellion the two young priests Ahimaaz and Jonathan had waited there for news from the city (2 Sam. xvii. 17). *Regel* means "a foot," and clothes were stamped with the feet.

<sup>5</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 11, says that it was "in the royal garden," which is possible enough.

<sup>6</sup> From 1 Chron. xvi. 39 we should conjecture that Zadok was in permanent charge of the old Tabernacle "in the high place at Gibeon:" but the point is uncertain.



Nathan, the venerable prophet. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, a man of great personal prowess and distinction, could command the allegiance of the *Gibborim*, and this trained bodyguard of 600 warriors was always ready for action. And if Adonijah had won over the younger princes of David's family to favour his pretensions, two older and weightier princes—Shimei and Rei—perhaps the sole and now aged survivors of David's goodly band of brothers, were faithful to Solomon.<sup>1</sup>

Nathan, shaking off the lethargy of ease and years, saw that not a moment must be lost. Solomon had been from his birth his special ward, and he had always marked him out as the destined heir of David's throne, and the fulfiller of designs for which David was unfitted by his past history. But it is difficult to get access to an Eastern king at any time, and especially when he is bedridden. Nathan could find no other way of letting David know the imminence of the crisis than by obtaining an interview with Bathsheba, and relying on her ascendancy over the mind of her husband. He told her that at that moment the son of Haggith was practically king, while David knew nothing of it; and that Adonijah's success meant the certain death of herself and of Solomon.<sup>2</sup> He instructed her at once to visit the king's bedchamber, and to remind him of his oath to her that Solomon should reign. He promised to be close at hand, and to confirm the news that Adonijah had been proclaimed in defiance of the king's wishes. Perhaps he feared that, in the decay of his powers and the apathy of age, David might delay all effective action till it was too late, unless his old feelings and affections were roused by Bathsheba.

Bathsheba went to the aged hero who was alone with Abishag.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ewald conjectures that this Shimei was David's brother Shimeah ("Gesch. Isr." iii. 266). There is a Shimei, a high officer of Solomon in 1 Kings iv. 18, and he had a brother Shimeah (1 Chron. iii. 5). Rei has been identified by Jerome ("Qu. Hebr." in 1 Kings i. 8) with Ira the Jairite, David's "priest" (2 Sam. xx. 26); but Ewald identifies him with Raddai (1 Chron. ii. 14), the fifth son of Jesse. In Hebrew, however, the interchange of Raddai and Rei (רַדַּי) is without parallel, and that of Rei (רַי) and Ira (עִירָא) is easy.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings i. 12. The impression left by the narrative is, that Solomon was still too young to take vigorous steps on his own behalf.

<sup>3</sup> Had Abishag been anything more than a nurse, the most stringent laws of Eastern etiquette would have rendered the entrance of Bathsheba impossible.



She entered with a deep bow and prostration,<sup>1</sup> which showed David that she had something serious to tell. The evident trepidation and solemnity with which both Bathsheba and Nathan approach the old and broken king contrasts with the free and bold intercourse of earlier days. It shows that David, as his power grew, became more and more an unapproachable Eastern sovereign.<sup>2</sup> In answer to his brief question Bathsheba reminded him of his oath that Solomon should sit on his throne, narrated to him the details of Adonijah's conspiracy, and told him that the eyes of the nation were upon him to exercise his acknowledged privilege of appointing his successor.<sup>3</sup> If the throne were suffered thus to go by default, she indicated that her own life and that of Solomon—who alone of the princes had not been invited to Adonijah's feast—would speedily be sacrificed.<sup>4</sup>

While she was yet speaking the Prophet was announced, as had been concerted between them. He, too, prostrated himself as though he felt a certain dread in delivering his message. "Had David really sanctioned," he asked, "the accession of Adonijah? At that moment a coronation feast was being held, and the prince's followers were shouting, 'God save king Adonijah.' Was this in accordance with David's wish? had he ordered it to be concealed from Nathan, and Zadok, and Benaiah, and Solomon, who had been omitted from the number of invited guests?"

Then Bathsheba—who in accordance with Eastern propriety

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings i. 31, "Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence." The word (sometimes rendered *worship*, as in Ps. xlv. 11; 1 Chron. xxix. 20) was applied to these Eastern acts of servile homage (2 Sam. ix. 6; Esth. iii. 2-5), which had now found their way into David's Court.

<sup>2</sup> How widely different is the access to the palace of Ishbosheth, where the murderers had only to pass one woman who had fallen asleep in cleaning wheat—2 Sam. iv. 6 (Hebr.).

<sup>3</sup> So the Persian kings nominated their successors (Herodotus, vii. 2).

<sup>4</sup> This was no extravagant supposition. Cleopatra and her son Caranus were put to death by Alexander (Pausan. viii. 7, § 5); Roxana, and her son Alexander, by Cassander (Justin. xv. 2). The murder of all "the seed royal" was quite a common incident in Eastern despotism (2 Kings xi. 1). See "Speaker's Commentary," *ad loc.* Grätz explains "I and my son shall be counted sinners" (1 Kings i. 21), to mean that David's marriage with Bathsheba "als eine schandbare gebrandmarkt werden würde."



had left the chamber while Nathan was speaking—was recalled. The king—swearing by his most solemn form of appeal, by “the Lord that had redeemed his soul out of all distress”<sup>1</sup>—renewed the oath which he had sworn at some previous period, and, with a flash of all his old energy, took the decisive step of having Solomon anointed and enthroned even in his own lifetime. With another solemn prostration Bathsheba retired, and Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah were summoned to the king’s chamber. He ordered them to mount his young son upon his own royal mule which none but the king might ride,<sup>2</sup> and to conduct him in procession to Gihon, a place which, like En-rogel, had a supply of water, and was not far from the city.<sup>3</sup> There Zadok was to anoint him with the consecrated oil taken from David’s tabernacle on Mount Zion. This was a step of solemn import.<sup>4</sup> It had not been done in the case of Adonijah, perhaps because the sacred oil was in the charge of Zadok;<sup>5</sup> or perhaps, again, because Adonijah was regarded as the legitimate successor. Then they were to blow the trumpets,<sup>6</sup> and shout “God save king Solomon.”

The Levite Benaiah—half-priest, half-soldier—replied to the king’s commands with an emphatic “Amen,” and a prayer that

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. iv. 6; comp. Ps. xix. 14. “O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.”

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Gen. xli. 43; 2 Kings x. 16; Esth. vi. 8. This circumstance would have a great effect on the popular imagination. In Persia it was death to sit, even by accident, in the king’s seat (Herodotus, vii. 16; Q. Curt. viii. 4, 17).

<sup>3</sup> See 2 Chron. xxxii. 20; xxxiii. 14. It was probably at the east of Jerusalem, and afterwards became a part of the city (2 Chron. xxxii. 20; xxxiii. 14). The Targ. of Jonathan, and the Syriac and Arabic Versions in 1 Kings i., identify it with Siloam. According to the Talmud, kings ought always to be anointed near a fountain—Keritoth, 5 (Otho, “Lexic. Rabbin.” s.v. Rex).

<sup>4</sup> Judg. ix. 8; 1 Sam. x. 1, xvi. 13; 1 Kings xix. 16; 2 Kings ix. 3, 6; 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. It has been inferred from these passages (the anointing of Saul, David, Jehu, and Joash) that the anointing was only necessary in cases of a disputed succession.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings i. 39, “Zadok the priest took a (rather *the*) horn of oil out of the tabernacle” (lit. out of *the tent*). The question arises, out of which tabernacle? He could hardly have had time to go to Gibeon and back, so that probably David’s tabernacle on Mount Zion is meant.

<sup>6</sup> Comp. the tumultuous consecration of Jehu (2 Kings ix. 13).



God might ratify his choice,<sup>1</sup> and make the throne of Solomon even greater than the throne of his father. Then the imposing procession set forth, with its bodyguard of Cherethites and Pelethites, and it was seen at a glance that nothing short of a civil war could shake the crown of the youth who had on his side the Prophet, the Priest of the house of Eleazer, and the Captain of the bodyguard, and who had thus been anointed and proclaimed by the king's direct command. The people were also on his side. The boisterous feast of Adonijah awoke no popular enthusiasm ; but it was kindled so vehemently on behalf of Solomon, that the earth rang again with the music of pipes and dances.<sup>2</sup> The *coup d'état* of Bathsheba and Nathan had been managed from first to last with consummate skill, and was crowned with complete success.

Adonijah's feast had ended, and the revolt had still to be carried out, when the practised ear of Joab caught the sound of the trumpet from Gihon, and of the tumultuous rejoicing in the city.<sup>3</sup> His heart misgave him, and, as he spoke, the company caught sight of their fellow-conspirator Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, who came running towards them.<sup>4</sup> Adonijah affected to regard his approach as a good omen,<sup>5</sup> but Jonathan only brought the fatal tidings, that while they had been feasting the friends of Solomon had been acting ; that he had been solemnly anointed at Gihon, and was at that moment sitting on the throne of the kingdom amid the rapturous congratulations of his Court. He then added the most chilling proof that Adonijah's attempt had failed — it was that the aged king had given his public sanction to the coronation of Solomon. Apparently he had been brought forth from his sick-chamber, and, in sign of prayerful approval of his servant's blessing, "bowed himself

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxviii. 6, "The prophet Jeremiah said, Amen : the Lord do so."

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 14, § 5 ; 1 Kings i. 40. In this verse, by a slight variation of reading, the Septuagint has "danced with dances" for "piped with pipes." "The earth *rent* with the sound" (LXX., ἐρράγη), should probably be "the earth *rang*" (Vulg., *insonuit*. Josephus, ὡς περιηχέσθαι τὴν γῆν.)

<sup>3</sup> This shows that both En-rogel and Gihon were near the city, and within hearing distance of each other.

<sup>4</sup> He, too, had joined Adonijah, though he had acted as a watchman and spy against Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 27 ; xvii. 17).

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this was an auspicious formula (2 Sam. xviii. 27).



upon the bed,"<sup>1</sup> and blessed the God of Israel who had thus enabled him before he died to see one of his sons sitting upon his throne.<sup>2</sup>

At these tidings the inflated bubble of Adonijah's crude and ill-starred conspiracy immediately burst. The guests rose and scattered themselves in every direction. Adonijah himself, deserted by every one of his adherents, fled in terror to the altar—perhaps the one which David had erected on the threshing-floor of Araunah—and grasped hold of the horns of the altar.<sup>3</sup> His cry for pity was brought to the young king. "Behold," they said, "Adonijah feareth king Solomon : for, lo, he hath caught hold of the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword."

Solomon behaved with calm magnanimity. The devotion of the people had shown that he had nothing to fear from Adonijah's rivalry. Had Adonijah been successful he would certainly have put Solomon, if not Bathsheba also, to death. So much was known from the character of the man. But Solomon was unwilling to add another pang and another tragedy to those which had already rent the heart of his father. He gave his word, which he thought sufficient without the addition of an oath, that so long as Adonijah's conduct was trustworthy, not a hair of his head should fall to the ground.<sup>4</sup> Adonijah was led down the altar steps and taken into Solomon's presence. He bowed himself before his younger brother, who, without deigning to reproach him, only addressed to him the laconic order, "Go to thine house." He was not even imprisoned or deprived of his rank ; but he was told plainly that a second offence would not be overlooked.

The other conspirators were for the present pardoned. The rebellion, to which they had lent their influence, was treated as folly which might be disdainfully amnestied in the joy of a new

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings i. 47 ; comp. Gen. xlvii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> In the solemn assembly described in 1 Chron. xxviii., when David gave to Solomon his charge about building the temple, we are told that "the king *stood up upon his feet*."

<sup>3</sup> See 2 Sam. vi. 17, 18 ; Exod. xxvii. 2, xxix. 12, xxx. 10. Sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices they were "symbols of blessing and salvation," by grasping which the offender put himself under God's protection (Bähr, "Symbolik," i. 474).

<sup>4</sup> A proverbial expression (1 Sam. xiv. 45 ; 2 Sam. xiv. 11).



accession, unless they should be guilty of some fresh transgression.<sup>1</sup>

And now David's death drew near. He had been on the throne for forty years and six months.<sup>2</sup> His last poem has been preserved to us. In it he calls himself "the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel." He alludes to his prophetic gift as coming from the Spirit of God. The God and the Rock of Israel had taught him, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Such a righteous ruler is as the cloudless light of the morning sun, and the tender grass which springs up and gleams in the sunshine after rain. He expresses the conviction that God had granted him an everlasting covenant, and would cause all his salvation and all his desire to grow.<sup>3</sup> Worthlessness, indeed, would still continue, and required no gentle handling. It must be beaten down as with iron and the staff of a spear, and finally burnt with fire.

But besides this last legacy of song David left some specific directions to his youthful, inexperienced son. He bids him to be courageous, and show himself a man ;<sup>4</sup> and he assures him that the one secret of his future prosperity depends on his obedience to the will of God as written in the law of Moses. He seems to have addressed him both in a private exhortation, in which he gave him full directions about building the "house of the Lord,"<sup>5</sup> and also at a very solemn public gather-

<sup>1</sup> Of these events the Books of Chronicles give no hint. They say only (1 Chron. xxiii. 1): "So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel." Then, after a long account of David's preparations, and of his organization of the worship, they pass to a solemn assembly in which David proclaims Solomon as his successor (xxviii.), and has him anointed, "the second time" by Zadok, to be "ruler" (xxix. 22); after which the narrative passes on to David's death, and Solomon's offering at Gibeon (2 Chron. i.).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. v. 5 ; 1 Chron. iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The true rendering seems to be—

"For is not my house so with God ?

Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant,

Ordered in all things and sure ;

For all my salvation and all my desire

Will He not make it to grow ?"—2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Deut. xxxi. 7 ; Josh. i. 6, 7, &c.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Chron. xxii.



ing,<sup>1</sup> in which he entrusted him to the charge of the whole congregation, and ended his address with a very noble prayer and blessing, and with enormous holocausts.

To our modern notions it would have seemed better had he confined his directions to matters of moral duty and public service ; but again and again in reading the life of David we are reminded of the differing moral standards of different ages and countries, and of the imperfect views prevalent in those times of comparative ignorance, "which God winked at." David had suffered so terribly at the hands of Joab and Shimei in the frightful days which succeeded Absalom's rebellion that he felt as if he had neglected the demands of justice by permitting them to live. Trained to regard as sacred the duties of "the avenger of blood," his conscience was uneasy at the thought that he had been too remiss and too impotent to see those duties fulfilled. He recalled Joab's two murders of Abner and of Amasa when he had "shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet ;"<sup>2</sup> and he enjoined Solomon not to let his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.<sup>3</sup> He gave the same injunction respecting Shimei, the only dan-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxii.-xxix. At the close of this scene the Chronicler says (ver. 20) that the whole congregation "*worshipped the Lord and the king.*" The expression significantly shows both the exaltation of the monarch and the sacred character with which he had been invested.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Sam. iii. 39 ; xix. 5-7 ; xx. 10. David does not venture to remind Solomon of Joab's murder of Absalom, which perhaps rankled most deeply in his heart, but to which Solomon himself owed his throne. Nor does he mention Adonijah's rebellion. But Joab had evidently been a lifelong thorn in David's side ; he had found "this son of Zeruiah" too hard for him (2 Sam. iii. 39).

<sup>3</sup> Joab was probably not much younger than David, though he was his nephew. Zeruiah, the mother of the three heroes, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, was indeed a "sister of the sons of the Jesse" (1 Chron. ii. 16), but perhaps herself a daughter not of Jesse, but of *Nahash*, a former husband of Jesse's wife. Abigail, at any rate, mother of Amasa and sister of Zeruiah (2 Sam. xvii. 25), is called the "daughter of Nahash." The Rabbis identify Jesse and Nahash ; but if, as Dean Stanley conjectured, Nahash was the king of Ammon, we can account for the kindness existing between Nahash and David, and the cruel character of Nahash was reflected in his grandsons. Further, if Joab was thus a grandson of the king of Ammon as well as a nephew of David, we can see a fresh reason for the position he assumed.



gerous representative of the cause of Saul. On the other hand, he enjoined kindness to Chimham and the other sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, who had shown him such conspicuous loyalty at the most trying moment of his life.<sup>1</sup>

So David died, and was buried in the city which he had founded, and his sepulchre was pointed out down to the remotest days of Jewish history.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xix. 31 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 29 ; comp. Neh. iii. 16 ; Ezek. xliii. 7-9. There were no graves in Jerusalem but those of the kings and (tradition says) of the Prophetess Huldah. Legend spoke of treasures concealed in David's tomb (Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 15, ¶ 3).

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE KINGDOM OF SOLOMON.

Development of Jewish royalty—The nation enters upon its manhood—The *Gibborim*—The army—The nation realizes its unique position—Possession of a strong and beautiful capital—Passionate fondness for Jerusalem—Commencing centralization of worship—The Ark at Jerusalem—"Jehovah's people"—Outburst of poetry—Dawn of prose literature—Elements of danger—Limits of the kingdom—Lines of possible progress—Significance of the records of Solomon.

"THEN sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was established greatly."<sup>1</sup> It was never quite forgotten by the national consciousness that the throne of the King of Judah and Israel was "the throne of the Lord."

The time of his full accession to the throne offers us the opportunity of judging the nature and resources of the kingdom which he was thus called upon to rule.

That kingdom had been amazingly developed since the rude and simple days of King Saul, though we can as little regard it "as one of the great Oriental Empires on a par with Chaldæa

<sup>1</sup> According to *Tarikh Montekheb*, and most of the Eastern historians, Solomon was not twelve years old when he came to the throne. (D'Herbelot, "Bibl. Orient.," s.v. *Soloman Ben Daoud*.) This tradition is also adopted by Eupolemus in the fragment preserved by Eusebius. Josephus says he was fourteen ("Antiq." viii. 7, § 8). Most modern writers suppose that he was about twenty; and he must certainly have been more than twelve or fourteen, if he had a son about the commencement of his reign. He reigned forty years, and Rehoboam at his accession was forty-one (1 Kings xi. 42; xiv. 21). If, indeed, we could assume that forty-one is a clerical error for twenty-one in 1 Kings xiv. 21, many difficulties would be removed. Comp. 2 Chron. xiii. 7.



and Assyria," as we can place David on a level with such great world-potentates as Rameses and Cyrus.<sup>1</sup>

In Saul's days Israel and Judah were little more than a loose federation of tribes, each more or less independent of the others, and all of them, time after time, an easy prey to the surrounding nations. The immense advance made by David may be estimated by the fact that his household troops and bodyguard alone consisted of six hundred trained and mighty warriors,<sup>2</sup> whereas in the wars against the Philistines, before his conquest of Goliath, Saul and Jonathan his son had been the only two well-armed men in the host of Israel.<sup>3</sup> The nation passed from boyhood to full manhood in the days of David as thoroughly and as rapidly as Greece did in the days of Miltiades and Lysander.

The *Gibborim* ("heroes," or *bravi*) were to David what the Prætorian cohort was to the Roman emperors, or the Varangian Guard to the Byzantine emperors, or the Janissaries to the Sultans, or the Swiss Guards to the French kings.

They were soldiers by profession, dependent on the king for their houses and their pay, and subservient to him with an allegiance which was not without danger to the popular liberty. To belong to this body was itself a distinction, and the records of deeds of prowess achieved by the leading officers were like the chronicles of chivalry, and fired the imagination of younger aspirants for warlike fame. Besides them, or mingled up with them and often under the same command, were the Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites, in all probability a band of foreign mercenaries, who served as a body of lictors to execute the king's commands.

David hardly possessed a "standing army" (as we should understand the term) in addition to these private troops; but, if we can rely upon the accuracy of the numbers, there were 1,300,000 men in Israel and Judah capable of bearing arms.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These are the opinions of Canon Rawlinson, "Five Great Monarchies," vol. ii. p. 333, quoted approvingly by Grätz, i. 299.

<sup>2</sup> The nucleus of these had been with him in his wanderings (2 Sam. xxiii. 8-13; 1 Sam. xxv. 13).

<sup>3</sup> Even in a time of war Saul had only had 3,000 men with him (1 Sam. xiii. 2).

<sup>4</sup> A sort of standing army had been one of the evils of a monarchy which Samuel had foretold (1 Sam. viii. 11, 12).



Besides the levies which could be called out at any time, David seems to have maintained in his service a body of 288,000 men, who served in monthly relays of 24,000 under the command apparently of leading Gibborim.<sup>1</sup> But much obscurity hangs over this statement, for this body of troops took no discernible part either in Absalom's or Adonijah's rebellion. They may, however, have been a sort of drilled militia serving in garrison towns. Cavalry was never an effective branch of the service, as it had been always discouraged by the religious teachers of the nation. David houghed the horses which he took in war, for the nature of the country made them, in any case, all but useless. The offensive arms used by the soldiers were chiefly spears and bows ; for defence they were supplied with shields, and probably with nothing else, though the Qur'ân credits David with the invention of chain armour.<sup>2</sup>

But besides this strong military organization David left to his people the tradition of victory. When the troops of Israel went to battle they were very far from being the timid warriors of old days whom a single champion could terrify. They had grown into a force which had a prestige to maintain, and which struck terror into the enemy by its very name and by the fame of its leaders.

The whole nation was further elevated by the consciousness of its position. A people which has produced so gifted a son as David rises at once to a higher rank. A vista of infinite possibilities opens before it. David owed none of his advantages to the accident of birth. Warrior and Poet and King and Priest and Prophet as he was, he had come to the front by the blessing of God upon his own natural genius. Many a bright-eyed youth on the hills of Judah as he contemplated that brilliant career of a sovereign taken from the sheepfolds may have felt in his heart the stirrings of high and honourable ambition.

The sense of nationality was enhanced by the possession for the first time of an undisputed capital. No city in the land could thenceforth rival Jerusalem, and David by conquering it from the Jebusites rendered a service of which the effects

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxvii. 1-15. Afterwards the troops were divided by their different arms (2 Chron. xiv. 8).

<sup>2</sup> Sura xxi. 80, quoted by Ewald, iii. 146. Goliath, however, had squamous armour (*qasqassîm*, 1 Sam. xvii. 5), and Ahab's "harness" (2 Chron. xviii. 33) was a sort of coat of mail, or corslet (*shiryôn*).



lasted for many centuries. He furnished the Hebrews with a citadel beautiful, central, and all but impregnable from its natural advantages. Jerusalem soon attracted to itself the passionate affection which has magnetized the imagination of Jews for so many centuries. Beautiful in situation, the joy of the whole earth, God was well known in her palaces for a sure refuge. In exile their poets sang—

“ If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,  
 Let my right hand forget her cunning ;  
 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth  
 If I remember thee not ;  
 If I prefer not Jerusalem  
 Above my chief joy ” \* (Ps. cxxxvii. 5-8).

And at the most solemn moment in the history of the Lord Himself, His only recorded outburst of weeping was when He cried to Jerusalem, “ If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

But besides this, David, with deep insight, was determined that Zion, “the City of David,” should henceforth be the centre not only of the national life, but also of all the deepest religious associations of the people. This consecration of a new city into a shrine was by no means an easy task. Palestine abounded in high places and sanctuaries of all kinds, many of which, like Hebron, had been venerated from time immemorial. Moreover, the old Tabernacle of the Wanderings still stood at Gibeon, and David did not venture to remove it. The Ark, however, was not at that high place. After its capture by the Philistines, it had come to be regarded with such intense terror, that the men of Bethshemesh, only desirous of getting rid of it, sent to the people of Kirjath-jearim to come and fetch it ; and they had placed it on a hill under the charge of Eleazar the son of Abinadab. David’s first attempt to carry it thence to Jerusalem had been cut short by the tragic death of Uzzah, and it had been left at the house of Obed-Edom in Gath-Rimmon. But hearing that it had brought to Obed-Edom a great increase of prosperity, David had brought it to Mount Zion with a joyous procession of

\* Compare Psalms xlviii. 12, 13 ; cxvii. 18, 19 ; cxxii. ; cxxv. 2.

† Luke xix. 42—ἐκλαυσειν, “ He wept aloud.” In the case of Lazarus He only ἑδάκρυσεν, “ shed silent tears.”



Levites, singers, elders, and soldiers, amid a scene which made a deep impression on the national imagination. Thenceforth it never left Jerusalem till it was either destroyed in the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, or carried away to Babylon, or, according to the Jewish tradition, safely hidden by Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> For a short time it made Jerusalem as sacred as Gibeon, until, in the reign of Solomon, the old Tabernacle was removed from Gibeon altogether, and stowed away in one of the chambers of the Temple. Solomon did but carry out the far-seeing plan of his father, which caused the capital of the nation to be henceforth regarded also as the City of Jehovah, and the "*Kibleh*" or sacred direction of the nation's worship, which it continued to be, even when they were carried into distant lands.<sup>2</sup>

Of David's great preparations for the building of the Temple, and of the elaborate religious reform with which it was connected, we shall speak hereafter ; but the Temple was only the visible sign of the impress which he stamped upon his people, and which was his most memorable service. It was the sole effectual mode of counteracting their tendency to plunge into a career of worldly commerce and conquest, and to become oblivious of the loftier mission to which they were called. With the distinctness of their nationality was brought home to them the lofty consciousness that they were "Jehovah's people." The monarchy had not been inaugurated until they had learnt the lessons of the long period of the Judges, which taught them, by reiterated crises of defeat and servitude, that they could only be strong in God's protection, and that this protection depended on their own faithfulness. David immortalized his own yearnings and convictions in imperishable song, and thus they passed into the common thoughts of the nation. The supreme gifts with which God had endowed him were given him for the purpose of fixing the faith of Israel, and pointing to the Messianic hope which was to be their main support during ages of affliction. It was granted to him to pour forth the songs which were the most precious part of their worship. The poetic spirit thus awakened did not wholly desert them for more than five hundred years, and it echoed to the last the sacred aspirations by which it had been inspired in the breast of the hero-king.

This outburst of poetry was naturally accompanied by a wider

<sup>1</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 1-8.

<sup>2</sup> Dan. vi. 10.



development of prose literature. We henceforth hear of a Recorder or Historiographer as one of the regular officials in the Court of the kings of Judah. For the first time the "Chronicles" or State papers began to be carefully preserved.<sup>1</sup> No less than three great prophets—Samuel, Gad, and Nathan—became biographers of parts of his life and reign,<sup>2</sup> and it formed an epoch sufficiently important for long subsequent notice by heathen historians like Nicolaus of Damascus and Eupolemus.<sup>3</sup>

But it would be wrong to overlook the fact that the legacy left by David to his son was not one of unmixed good. In the senile neglect of kingly duties which seems to have marked his later years, and which forfeited in great measure the old affection of his people, we mark the deteriorating influence of more pompous surroundings, a deeper seclusion, a more arbitrary government. All his Temple preparations were less inspiring and less significant than one of his earlier outbursts of spiritual emotion. In a larger harem, a more punctilious etiquette, a more materialized conception of religion, we find traces of the lowered ideal of the kingliness and worship which had shone forth in days when he was as yet unweakened by his great sin, and its terrible retribution. The grandeur of Solomon's inheritance was impaired by the personal deterioration of its glorious founder.

We may conclude this survey of the state of the people over whom Solomon was now called to reign, by mentioning the limits of the kingdom which David's power had so widely extended. When Saul died, Israel was struggling for bare existence against the paltry power of the Philistines. Before David died he was king of a district which might be said, with little exaggeration, to stretch from the Orontes to the border of the Egyptian desert, and from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. Parts of this territory were nominally ruled by native kings, but they all more or less acknowledged the supremacy of David. Very early in his reign at Jerusalem, he had crushed the Philistines and taken from them Metheg-ha-Ammah, "the bridle of the mother city," or, as it is expressed in the Chronicles, "Gath and her daughters,"<sup>4</sup> though he allowed Gath to retain a tributary king.<sup>5</sup> He almost annihilated the predatory hordes of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxvii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xxix. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 5, § 2; "C. Apion." i. 23; Eusebius, "Præp. Ev." lx. 30.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. viii. 1; 1 Chron. xviii. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings ii. 39.



Amalek in the south. Aided especially by Benaiah, who slew with his own hand two sons of Ariel the king of Moab,<sup>1</sup> he had reduced the Moabites to tribute, and put a multitude of them to death. Northwards he had conquered Hadarezer, king of Zobah, who had probably lent his assistance to Hanun, king of Ammon, when that foolish son of David's old friend Nahash had rejected the advances of David with wanton insult.<sup>2</sup> In this war he stormed Rabbah, the strong capital of Ammon.<sup>3</sup> It was from this city that he took the jewelled crown of Milcom which, according to Jewish tradition, no one but Ittai of Gath had ventured to tear from the idol's forehead.<sup>4</sup> He defeated the kings of Zobah and Maacah in a great victory. In a subsequent battle at Helam,<sup>5</sup> he so completely routed the Syrian forces of Damascus, and their auxiliaries, of whom some had joined them from beyond the Euphrates, that he broke down the Aramæan supremacy and subjected the Syrians to tribute. These successful wars greatly increased his wealth,<sup>6</sup> and he received large congratulatory or propitiatory presents from Toi, king of Hamath on the Orontes,<sup>7</sup> who sent his own son to cement the treaty between them. The overthrow of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, somewhere to the south of the Dead Sea,<sup>8</sup> and the occupation of their towns with Israelite garrisons completed the triumphs by which David "gat him a great name," and handed down to his son a strong and compact empire. In his person the old promise to Abraham was first fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

What his son made of that empire we shall see in the following pages. Israel was liable to a new danger. That the Israelites should feel that they had now attained to a cosmopolitan condition, and that their kingdom could enter into a feeling of solid-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xxiii. 20, 21; 1 Chron. xi. 22. The true reading is, "he slew the two sons of Ariel of Moab."

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. x. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xii. 29. The Ark was taken to this siege, and David himself was present at the capture.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." vii. 5; Jerome, "Qu. Hebr." ad 1 Chron. xx. 2.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Sam. x. 16, 17. The Vulgate reads *adduxit exercitum eorum*.

<sup>6</sup> From Hadarezer's soldiers were taken the "shields of gold" (2 Sam. viii. 7), which were the proudest of all the trophies of Jerusalem (Cant. iv. 4).

<sup>7</sup> Josephus says that Toi wanted to buy off David's opposition with "vessels of ancient workmanship" ("Antiq." vii. 5; § 4).

<sup>8</sup> 2 Sam. viii. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. xv. 18-21.



arity with surrounding kingdoms was natural, and in some respects advantageous. But the advantage would be purchased at a fatal cost if the sons of the Chosen People forgot their unique function, and, while they entered into the career of worldly politics, ceased to look, or looked only with a feeling of half contempt, at the rock whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged. Would Solomon guide them safely through the perils of contamination from those "gay religions full of pomp and gold" which adored devils for deities, and against which the very existence of the Hebrews was intended to be a Divine protest? Would he inspire them with loftier ideals than those of vulgar magnificence, material prosperity, and a liturgical religion? Would he leave them with a deeper conviction that no national happiness was comparable with that of the nation which had the Lord for their God? Or would he, on the other hand, sink into a mere Oriental despot, absolute amid the torpor of a dreadful serfdom, gorged with wealth amid an oppressed population, the loveless lord of a voluptuous harem, ruling over the destinies, but not in the hearts of his people? If he fell into the latter temptations, the "Syrian, ready to perish," who was the father of the race, would have been a safer pattern and a less erring guide.

The sacred records enable us indeed to answer these questions, but their treatment of the reign of Solomon differs characteristically from their account of David. The rich and varied story of the hero occupies a large part of two entire books. The original documents which recorded the fame of Solomon—the "Book of the Acts of Solomon," and the writings of Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo—have disappeared, but the Books of Kings and Chronicles devote not more than ten or eleven chapters to the Wise King; and those chapters are mainly occupied with details about his commerce, his buildings, and his organization. They dwell but lightly on his fall, to which indeed the Chronicler makes no allusion. There was little of spiritual instructiveness in a reign during which, from the disappearance of Nathan from public life down to the rise of Ahijah, the voice of the prophets was dumb, and men spoke in whispers under a despotic rule.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The details derivable from other sources such as Josephus, and the few fragments of Pagan historians, Dius, Eupolemus, Nicolaus of Damascus, Alexander Polyhistor, Menander, and Laitus, which are referred to by him ("Antiq." viii. 5, § 3), by Eusebius ("Præp. Evang." ix. 30), and by Clemens of Alexandria ("Strom." i. 21, § 114), are of little or no importance.



## CHAPTER V.

### INITIAL TROUBLES OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.

**Tragic events—Secret ambition of Adonijah—His visit to Bathsheba—The Queen-mother—Interview between them—Her unsuspecting acceptance of his request for the hand of Abishag—She visits the king—Her gracious reception—Sudden fury of Solomon—Possible causes for his violent anger—He dooms Adonijah to death—Alarm of Joab—Benaiah ordered to slay him—Hesitates to drag him from the horns of the altar—Execution of Joab—Fate of his posterity—Disgrace and banishment of the High Priest Abiathar—Zadok and the House of Eleazar—Destiny of the two families of Eleazar and Ithamar—Shimei ordered to live at Jerusalem—His visit to Gath to recover his slaves—His execution—Vigour of Solomon's rule—His kindness to Chimham, son of Barzillai—Foreign enemies—Escape of Hadad from the massacre of the Edomites—His reception in Egypt—His return—The Syrian Rezon—Geshur—Solomon's affinity with Pharaoh—One of the Tanite dynasty—National disapproval of the wedding in later times—Establishment of Solomon's power—The Second Psalm—Note on the Pharaoh of 1 Kings iii. 1.**

**BEFORE** entering on the peaceful developments of Solomon's government, it will be necessary to glance at some of the troubles which marked the beginnings of his reign, before he had won for himself a secure seat upon David's throne.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is obviously no part of my task to enter into minute critical questions as to the date and origin and character of various elements in the Books of Kings. They are acknowledged by all inquirers to be honest and trustworthy sources of information, though they are fragmentary and did not assume their final form till about B.C. 560. But though the language and references of these Books show that they were not composed as a whole till nearly five centuries after the earlier events which they record, the author



The first tragedy was but a sequel to the rebellion of Adonijah.

Solomon had not stained his accession by any deeds of blood. The deadly spirit of Eastern monarchies, which

“ Bears like the Turk no brother near the throne,”

had not led him to interfere with the rank or peace of any of David's other sons. Even Adonijah had been magnanimously pardoned, and had been allowed with unusual generosity to live in his own palace, and resume his position as a prince of the royal house. But the vain and restless spirit of the son of Haggith could not rest content. He brooded sullenly over the collapse of his conspiracy, and on the vain fancy that the choice of Israel had confirmed the right of seniority by which he claimed the kingdom. He determined upon subtle means to strengthen his pretensions, and vainly hoped that the young brother—whose qualities were as yet unknown, and whom in his heart he probably despised—would not be keensighted enough to penetrate his designs. He determined, if possible, to gain for his wife, Abishag, the beautiful maiden of Shunem, who had been selected rather as the nurse than as the bride of David's old age. The possession of a late king's wife would, by all the customs and traditions of Eastern monarchy, greatly enhance the dignity of his position, and give him opportunities for urging further claims.<sup>1</sup>

Yet he did not venture to approach Solomon himself with a request, which even to his stupidity must have been seen to be of a perilous character. He determined to ingratiate himself with Bathsheba, and so to beguile the king into granting a favour of which perhaps he might not suspect the secret import, or which, at any rate, he would not like to refuse if his mother asked it.

As Queen-mother, Bathsheba was now the highest lady in undoubtedly made use of ancient and authentic documents. The Books of Chronicles are later in date, and are written to present certain views and aspects of the Sacred History, especially as seen from a Levitical standpoint.

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Sam. xii. 8, where Nathan says to David that God had “given him his master's wives into his bosom.” See, too, 1 Kings xx. 7 ; 2 Kings xxiv. 15 ; Herodotus, iii. 68 ; Selden, “Uxor. Hebr.” i. 10. The request was at the best unseemly and illegal (Levit. xviii. 8 ; xx. 11).

the realm. Owing to the jealousies which are inherent in polygamy, the wife of an Eastern king, even if she be the chief wife, is yet only one among many, and is in reality a sort of superior slave. The rank of queen is held by the king's mother. Every reader of the chronicles of Israel and Judah will have been struck by the fact that the name of the Queen-mother is carefully recorded, even when the record is silent as to the king's wives.<sup>1</sup> The influence of Bathsheba must have been further strengthened by the fact that to her in no small measure Solomon was indebted for the saving of his life, and for his throne.

She was visibly alarmed by the visit of Adonijah. "Comest thou peaceably?" she asked him, in a formula which was customary at moments of misgiving.<sup>2</sup> He said, "Peaceably," and asked leave to prefer a request. "Say on," she said. Adonijah reminded her, with no very scrupulous regard for truth, that the kingdom had been his, and that all Israel set their faces on him, but that he now recognized that though he was king by the will of men, he was not so by the grace of God, who had bestowed the kingdom on his brother. He had come to ask but for one compensation for so immense a loss, and he once more intreated Bathsheba not to refuse him. "Say on," she repeated, cautiously confining herself to the fewest words. Then he asked her to obtain Solomon's permission for him to wed Abishag the Shunammite.

Strange to say, Bathsheba failed to see the significance of the request. Perhaps she pitied the prince who had so nearly wrested the splendid prize of royalty from her son's hands, and she may have thought that the position of Abishag differed entirely from that of David's other wives. "Well," she answered, "I will speak for thee unto the king."

She seems to have lost no time in fulfilling her promise. Solomon received her with every demonstration of love and respect. He rose to meet her, bowed himself before her, and ordered another throne to be placed for her at the right hand of his own. Then she mentioned her "small petition," and begged him not to refuse it. "Ask on, my mother," he said; "for I will not say thee nay."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Kings xi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 4, 5; 2 Kings ix. 22.

<sup>3</sup> We see at once the difference of Bathsheba's position as wife of David, whom she approached with prostration, and as Queen-mother, to whom



Then she spoke the fatal words which doomed Adonijah to death. "Let Abishag, the Shunammite, be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife."

Was there any secret jealousy or scheme of secret ambition at work in the mind of Bathsheba, which made it seem to her not undesirable that the beautiful Shunammite—one it must be remembered so beautiful that she had been sought for "out of all the coasts of Israel"—should be removed from the Court of Solomon? It is not possible to unravel the dark intrigues of Eastern palaces ; but Bathsheba, if any such motive had been working in her mind, must have been amazed and terrified by the sudden, and to her incomprehensible, blaze of anger with which her "small petition" was received.

"And why," he burst out, "dost thou ask Abishag, the Shunammite, for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is my elder brother ; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah !"

Was the king's sudden fury due only to the suspicion of another conspiracy?

It may be so ; but an attentive study of the Song of Songs has led many critics to believe that other and more passionate feelings were also at work. Passing over for the present the question of the authorship of Canticles, it is very probable that the little poem may be founded on traditional circumstances ; and if so, the lovely Shulamite of the Song, whose pure love for her shepherd lover triumphs over all the seductions of a royal wooer, may have been meant for no other than Abishag of Shunem, and may indicate that Solomon desired to make her his queen. By the ordinary custom of Eastern Courts he had a right to do so,<sup>1</sup> and the damsel was young,<sup>2</sup> and "very fair." If so, the transports of jealousy may have precipitated the conduct which he believed to be also dictated by the safety of his crown.<sup>3</sup>

the king himself bows. An Eastern king's wife receives little public notice, but a Queen-mother (*Sultana walidé*) is received with the deepest respect even by the reigning king. See Cheyne's Isaiah i. p. 47 (on Isa. vii. 13).

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Sam. xii. 8, xvi. 22 ; Herodotus, iii. 68-88.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings i. 2-4, "A young virgin . . . very fair."

<sup>3</sup> Compare the helpless remonstrance of Ishbosheth with Abner when he took Rizpah, Saul's concubine (2 Sam. iii. 7 ; see, too, Wollaston, "Muhammad," p. 5).



At any rate, he at once swore, by the most solemn form of oath, that this petition should cost Adonijah his life.

He had a strong and ready agent at hand in the person of Benaiah, and this officer apparently, on that same day, despatched the prince with his own hand : "He fell upon him that he died." According to Eastern notions this execution was amply justified, and there is not the least sign that Solomon showed any cruel jealousy towards his other brothers. Indeed, he advanced the sons of his brother Nathan to posts of great honour and responsibility, and when his own line became extinct, the Davidic succession was restored in the person of Salathiel, a descendant of Nathan.<sup>2</sup> In this respect Solomon contrasts favourably even with a Constantius ; for it would have been even easier for Solomon than it was for the Christian emperor to sweep away every adult sharer in the royal blood.

The terrible news of Adonijah's execution was at once conveyed to Joab. Whether he was still secretly fostering the cause of Adonijah we do not know, but Solomon was convinced that this was the case. A various reading in 1 Kings ii. 28 says that "he had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after *Solomon*." His conduct showed his terror if it did not prove his guilt. He at once fled to "take sanctuary," as it would have been called in the Middle Ages, at the tabernacle of the Lord—probably the old tabernacle of the wilderness, which was still served by Zadok or Abiathar at Gibeon—and there he "caught hold on the horns of the altar." And King Solomon, when he heard the tidings—so runs the addition of the Septuagint Version—"sent to Joab, saying, What hath happened to thee, that thou hast fled unto the altar? And Joab said, I was afraid of thee, and fled unto the Lord !" But Solomon had determined that this dangerous and blood-stained man should die. The protection and pardon which David had promised him had ended with David's life. Innocent blood still remained unavenged. Joab had left himself without excuse. He could not lord it over Solomon as he had lorded it over David by threatening to divulge the guilty secret of his life. He had no time, and he had probably lost the power, to raise an armed resistance against the compact force of mer-

<sup>2</sup> The Septuagint adds, "And Adonijah died on that day."  
Zech. xii. 12 ; Luke iii. 27-31.



cenaries whom Benaiah commanded. Benaiah received the order to fall on him, and went at once to Gibeon. But when he saw the defenceless old man clinging to the horns of the altar, he hesitated to slay him there, and bade him in the king's name to come forth. "Nay," said Joab, "but I will die here."

Benaiah scrupled to violate the sanctity of the place which had been respected when Adonijah had taken refuge there after his first rebellion.<sup>1</sup> He went back to the king for further instructions. But Solomon did not hesitate. The altar, in his judgment, was not meant to shelter so heinous a criminal. The law of Moses was expressly on his side, for it had ordered that a wilful murderer was to be torn away even from the altar, since blood was a pollution of the land.<sup>2</sup> He considered that recent events were as a Divine warning to wipe away in the blood of the guilty the dark stains of unpunished crime which might mar the prosperity of David's house. We must judge him neither by our customs nor by our moral standards. Benaiah obeyed, and, without one friend to lift an arm or breathe a petition in his favour, the hoary conspirator fell in Gibeon, hard by the scene of his vilest and most treacherous murder—the murder of Amasa "at the great stone of Gibeon."<sup>3</sup> It was a just retribution, but a deplorable end to a career of glory which had struck terror into the enemies of Israel. The conqueror of the City of Waters, the suppressor of Absalom's and Sheba's rebellions, died as a common criminal by the hands of justice.

Solomon's vengeance pursued his guilty cousin no further, and his friends—who, be it remembered, must have been Solomon's own kinsmen of David's house—were allowed to bury him honourably on his own estate in "the wilderness." But men remarked that a curse—the curse of David after Joab's murder of Abner<sup>4</sup>—seemed to cling to his descendants. It

<sup>1</sup> So in Athaliah's case the High Priest Jehoiada was naturally anxious that she should not be slain within the precincts of the sacred building (2 Kings xi. 15).

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxi. 14; Numb. xxxv. 30-33.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. xx. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Deut. xix. 13. The fact that Abner was murdered at Hebron, a refuge city (Josh. xxi. 13), took away from Joab even the poor excuse that he was acting as a *Goel* ("blood-avenger") for Asahel his brother; besides which Abner had only slain Asahel in self-defence, and against his will.



was believed that those descendants were marked out by calamity, and that among them were always some who were afflicted with leprosy, or were personally contemptible, or who fell by the sword, or were sunk in poverty and want.<sup>1</sup> From Jewish history they henceforth disappear.

The High Priest Abiathar seems to have viewed the accession of Solomon with only a sullen acquiescence, and the king believed that he also was a supporter of the new plot. But he hesitated to put him to death. He was old; he had long occupied the highest position in the priesthood; above all, he had been for many years the unswervingly faithful follower of David's fortunes when he was a hunted outlaw,<sup>2</sup> although David had been the unwitting cause of the dreadful massacre at Nob, in which Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar, and all his kinsmen had perished.<sup>3</sup> The "sharer of all the afflictions wherewith David had been afflicted," the priest of his religion, the counsellor of his reign—he who had so often consulted the once famous but now neglected Urim and Thummin—he who probably had anointed him king at Hebron<sup>4</sup>—could not be put to death with so little formality as even Joab. He was banished to his paternal estate at Anathoth,<sup>5</sup> and "thrust out" from all priestly functions during the remainder of his life, not without a significant warning that he would not again be spared if he gave ground for offence.<sup>6</sup> From this time he vanishes from history. He was regarded as "a man of death." A doom hung over his head, and, aged as he was, it is probable that he did not long survive so terrible a disgrace.

Zadok now became sole priest, and in his person was restored

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. iii. 29, "Let there not fail from the house of Joab one that . . . *handleth the distaff*" (like a woman). The word means "distaff" in Prov. xxxi. 19. The rendering of the Authorized Version, "that leaneth on a staff" (*i.e.* a cripple), is also tenable.

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Sam. xxii. 20; 2 Sam. xv. 24-29.

<sup>3</sup> The line of descent was Eli, Phinehas, Ahitub, Ahijah, Ahimelech, Abiathar. It is not certain whether Ahijah and Ahimelech were not brothers, or even the same person called by two equivalent names.

<sup>4</sup> See for Abiathar's previous history 1 Sam. xxii., xxiii. 6, 9, xxx. 7; 2 Sam. ii. 1, 4, v. 19, xv., xvii. 15-17; 1 Kings ii. 26; 1 Chron. xxvii. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Anathoth (now Anáta) was a priest's city N.N.E. of Jerusalem, and little more than an hour's distance (Josh. xxi. 18; 1 Chron. vi. 60; Jer. i. 1, xxxii. 6-12).

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings ii. 26, "I will not *at this time* put thee to death."



the lost prerogative of the house of Eleazar, the elder son of Aaron. Eli had been a descendant not of Eleazar, but of Aaron's younger son Ithamar,<sup>1</sup> and from him the priesthood had descended through several generations. How the house of Ithamar had succeeded in displacing the house of Eleazar we are not told, though it is implied that it was in consequence of the Divine sanction.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish legend on the subject is striking, and not impossible. They say that Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, had approved and even carried out with his own hand the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, but that this human sacrifice—as in the analogous story of Idoneus of Crete—had aroused such an outburst of popular indignation that Phinehas and his family had in consequence been displaced. Had Eli proved himself worthy, the priesthood would have been established in his line, but his culpable negligence and the crimes of his sons brought down a curse upon his whole family. When Zadok—then a young and valiant man—had joined David at Hebron, it was found that, of the twenty-four priestly courses, only eight were of the line of Ithamar, and sixteen were of the line of Eleazar.<sup>3</sup> From this time Zadok is always mentioned before Abiathar, though the actual precedence seems to have belonged to the latter as the older man, and the one already in uncontested possession of the dignity. After the conquest of Jerusalem, and the removal of the Ark to Mount Zion, Zadok was perhaps provided for by being placed at the head of the priestly service in the capital, while Abiathar remained in charge of the ancient Tabernacle on the High Place of Gibeon.<sup>4</sup> When the design of building a magnificent Temple to Jehovah as the centre of the national worship had once been determined on, it may well have been felt that it would be interfered with by the existence of so venerable a shrine as that of Gibeon, and Solomon may not have been sorry that the defection of Abiathar enabled him to concentrate the sacerdotal dignity in the person of the repre-

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Chron. xxiv. 3 ; 2 Sam. viii. 17 ; and compare 1 Chron. vi. 4-15 ; Ezra vii. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chron. xii. 28 ; xxiv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Or the arrangement may have been the other way. See 1 Chron. xvi. 39, compared with xv. 11 ; 2 Sam. xv. 24, 25. We might almost infer from these passages that the functions of the priests at the two sanctuaries alternated.



sentative of the older and more powerful line by whose hands he had been anointed king.<sup>1</sup> In that line it continued undisturbed till the days of the Maccabees.<sup>2</sup>

There were eighteen high priests, each averaging a term of twenty-five years' office, for the four hundred and fifty-four years from this time till the Captivity ; and then, after a lapse of fifty-two years, the line resumed its office, and there were fifteen more high priests of this family till the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. The house of Abiathar, on the other hand, dwindled, for some time at least, into misery and insignificance. Some of its members perished by the sword in the flower of their age,<sup>3</sup> while others were reduced to a poverty so abject that they had to come crouching as suppliants to the priests of the house of Zadok to obtain some inferior offices about the Temple, or at least "a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread." Zadok no doubt took part in that organization of the priesthood and of the whole Levitic system which was one great work connected with the completion of the Temple. From this time, however, we hear little or nothing about him. As he joined David in his early wanderings he must now have been at least sixty years old, and sixty years was regarded as an advanced age among the Jews of this epoch. Zadok's name is not mentioned in the long details of the ceremony of Dedication ; and in the list of Court officers, Azariah, "the son" — or more accurately the grandson—of Zadok is mentioned first as the Priest. The son of Zadok was the swift runner and crafty diplomatist Ahimaaz, who must have died in his father's lifetime, leaving the heritage of the chief priesthood to Azariah his son.<sup>4</sup>

The supporters of Adonijah were now crushed, but one powerful enemy of the house of David still remained. Shimei was the sole formidable representative of the ruined house of Saul.

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the sole historical instance of the deposition of a High Priest during more than eight centuries.

<sup>2</sup> B.C. 170. They also furnished the chief Levites (Ezek. xl. 46 ; and in Ezek. xliii. 19, xliv. 15, &c., they alone are recognized, nothing being said of the "sons of Abiathar.")

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 33-36 (see the reading of the Septuagint).

<sup>4</sup> For Ahimaaz see 1 Chron. vi. 8, 9 ; 2 Sam. xv., xviii. The Ahimaaz of 1 Kings iv. 15 is a different person, and in 1 Chron. vi. 9, 10 there is some obvious disruption in the text (see *infr.* p. 64). Josephus says that Ahimaaz became High Priest, and such seems to have been the Rabbinic tradition. If so, it can only have been for a very short time.



David had felt that he was still dangerous, and held that the pardon which he had bestowed was not binding on his successor. At any rate, Solomon, in his determination to secure his throne by vigorous measures, sent for Shimei, and ordered him to leave his home at Bahurim in the limits of the tribe of Benjamin, in which Saul's adherents were chiefly to be found,<sup>1</sup> and to come and live under surveillance at Jerusalem. He told him in the most distinct terms that if, on any pretext whatever, he left the limits of the city and crossed the Wâdy of Kidron, he should be put to death ; and his blood would be upon his own head.<sup>2</sup> Shimei accepted these conditions on oath,<sup>3</sup> and for three years he observed them. At the end of that time two of his slaves ran away to Achish, king of Gath, and Shimei went to Gath to demand their extradition. Perhaps he fancied that the fact would not be known, or persuaded himself that the nature of his errand would be a sufficient justification, or that the stern decree had practically fallen into desuetude : or perhaps he imagined that as he had not crossed the Kidron, or entered the domain of Benjamin, there could be no great harm in his going.<sup>4</sup> But Solomon was not a man to suffer the suspicion of any weakness in his conduct. Shimei had proved himself wholly undeserving of favour in past days, and now, with strange levity and infatuation, and without even asking leave, he had broken the oath which he had taken, and defied the warning by which it had been accompanied. Again we must not judge of Solomon's conduct by modern rules. Judged, as he should be judged, by the standard of his contemporaries, he was so far from being regarded unmerciful, that he was specially credited with *not* having sought from God the death of his enemies.<sup>5</sup> He probably saw in Shimei's conduct a proof that the curse of

<sup>1</sup> Bahurim, where Shimei lived (1 Kings ii. 8) was very near Jerusalem (2 Sam. iii. 16 ; xvii. 18).

<sup>2</sup> Only by crossing Kidron could he enter the tribe in which he was most dangerous, but he was also forbidden to go "any whither."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings ii. 42.

<sup>4</sup> A curious Talmudic notice says : " Let a man reside in the same place as his *Rabbi* ; for so long as Shimei the Son of Gera lived, just so long did Solomon (Shimei's disciple) defer marrying the daughter of Pharaoh " (Berachoth, f. 8, 1 ; Schwab, " *Traité des Berakhoth*," p. 252 ; Hershon, " *Treasures of the Talmud*," p. 257). Shimei seems to have had illustrious descendants in Mordecai and Esther (Esth. ii. 5).

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings iii. ii.



God was resting upon him, and that he was foredoomed to a bloody end. Sending for him, he sternly upbraided him, and once more gave to Benaiah the fatal order. In the person of Shimei the last of the domestic enemies of David's house perished, and the kingdom was established in the hands of Solomon. He had made clear to all men that it was no *fainéant* who had succeeded to the warrior and poet who had founded the throne. He had illustrated some of the precepts which were afterwards enshrined in his Proverbs as representing an ideal royalty. "A king that sitteth on the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil from his eyes." "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them." "The wrath of the king is as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it." "An evil man seeketh only rebellion, therefore an evil messenger shall be sent against him." "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger endangereth his own soul." "Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, "in a king's favour is life." Solomon continued the grateful acknowledgment which David had bestowed on the loyal house of Barzillai. Chimham, the youngest son of the aged Gileadite, continued to reside at his Court and to eat at his table; and having apparently received a grant from David's paternal estate, he founded a family of which the descendants were still flourishing in the days of Ezra. He founded at Bethlehem a *khan*, or caravanserai, which was known by his name ages afterwards.<sup>2</sup> Probably the sudden outburst of commerce in Solomon's reign made it a prosperous undertaking, and considering the stationary character of all Eastern institutions, we may well believe that it was in the stable of that caravanserai that the Christ was born.

But if Solomon did not wholly escape from opposition in his own kingdom, it was hardly likely that foreign enemies would leave him undisturbed. They had quailed before the prowess of David, and they feared the name of Joab even when David was dead. But of Solomon and of Benaiah, the new commander of the forces, they knew nothing. It was not without a

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xx. 8, 26; xvi. 14; xvii. 11; xx. 2; xxv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xli. 17. The house of Barzillai became mingled with the priestly line of Hakkoz by the intermarriage of an heiress of that line with the son of Hakkoz (Ezra ii. 61).



struggle that Solomon was allowed to fulfil the onien of his name.

The first and most persistent of his enemies was Hadad, a prince of Edom. "Revenge and wrong," the poet says,

"Bring forth their kind ;  
The foul cubs like their parents are."

Hadad had reasons to hate the name of David with an undying hatred. After the defeat of the Edomites Joab had remained no less than six months in the conquered country with the express object of exterminating the detested race. Such a task is, however, always impossible. Some of the Edomites had escaped from this indiscriminate massacre, and among them were some of the king's servants, who had been so fortunate as to save a little child—the sole survivor of his house. They fled by way of Midian and Paran to Egypt; and the reigning Pharaoh, who was hostile to the growing power of Israel, had given to Hadad a warm welcome. He had not only maintained him and assigned him an estate, but had even condescended to bestow upon the homeless fugitive the hand of the sister of his own queen, or Queen-mother, Tahpenes.<sup>1</sup> This lady bore him a son, who was named Genubath, who was treated in all respects like an Egyptian prince. But the splendours of Pharaoh's palace did not lull the wrath and vengeance which Hadad nursed in his heart against the destroyers of his race. On hearing that his old enemies were dead, he begged Pharaoh's leave to return from the placid pomp of an Egyptian palace to the wild freedom of his native land. The Egyptian king was hurt by the request, which he regarded as ungrateful; but with all the passion of an avenger of blood Hadad persisted in his wish, and, whether openly or secretly, succeeded in escaping from Egypt. He found his people slowly recovering from the dreadful blow which had

<sup>1</sup> *Gebîrah* may mean "Queen-mother" (1 Kings xv. 13). In the Septuagint this Pharaoh is wrongly called Shishak (Σουσακίμ), and his queen Thekemina, and it is added that an elder sister of Thekemina, named Anô, was given in marriage to Jeroboam. The Pharaoh must have been one of the Tanite kings of Lower Egypt, but we cannot pronounce with any certainty what was his name. The Septuagint additions are quite apocryphal. The protector of Hadad must have lived some time before the accession of Shishak, and the name of Shishak's queen was not Tahpenes, but Karaäma.



been inflicted on them in the last reign, and he was acknowledged as their king.<sup>1</sup> Solomon was far too strong to be seriously shaken, but Hadad harassed him continually with a guerilla warfare, which could be easily carried on from the mountain fastnesses of Idumæa.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was Hadad the only enemy. One of David's most decisive and splendid victories had been gained over Hadarezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah. A Syrian named Rezon, son of Eliada, had escaped from the overthrow, and from the wreck of the Syrian forces had collected an army sufficiently strong to conquer Damascus. Whether he was long able to maintain himself there we do not know, but he was a thorn in Solomon's side during the whole period of his reign.

Besides these troubles in the south and west of his dominions, Solomon was also harassed for a short time by a revolt of the Canaanites who rallied round the little kingdom of Geshur. From this danger, however, he was liberated when he espoused Pharaoh's daughter. For Pharaoh, landing an army at Joppa, took Geshur,<sup>3</sup> and presented it to Solomon as the dowry of his daughter. The marriage seems to have taken place early in the reign. Tradition long remembered these espousals, and the crown which on that day the Queen-mother herself placed upon the head of her still youthful son.<sup>4</sup>

This magnificent alliance—the most magnificent ever made by any Hebrew king—gave Solomon a new grandeur in the eyes of all surrounding nations. The Pharaoh in question must have been a king of the twenty-first or Tanite dynasty, then

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xi. 22, LXX., "And he was indignant against Israel, and reigned in the land of *Edom*." This depends on the reading *Edom* for *Aram* (אֲרָם *Aram*, Syria) in 1 Kings xi. 25. If the reading *Aram* be right, then we must suppose with Josephus ("Antiq." viii. 7, § 6) that Hadad failed in his attempt on Idumæa, but in some way or other became king of part of Syria, which may have been ceded to him by Rezon. But there is a confusion in the original text.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xi. 14-25 sufficiently shows that though narrated out of order, these events belong to the early parts of Solomon's reign.

<sup>3</sup> Gezer is identified by Ewald with Geshur; and Geshur may have become troublesome because Absalom was a grandson of its king Tolmai. Deut. xxiii. 7, 8 seems to permit marriage with Egyptians.

<sup>4</sup> Cant. iii. 11. This was probably Solomon's first marriage. Pharaoh would have been less likely to give his daughter to Solomon if he already had a wife—the Ammonitess Naamah—and a son Rehoboam.



rather in the decline of its power. Shishak, between 990–980 B.C., founded a new dynasty after the middle of Solomon's reign.<sup>1</sup> The father-in-law of Solomon must therefore have been one of the last two kings of the Tanites—either Psinaces or his son, Psusennes II. More probably it was the former, for Psusennes II. only reigned fourteen years, and with him the dynasty of Zoan came to an end.<sup>2</sup> Of Pharaoh's daughter we hear very little. It is clear that she bore no son to Solomon, and she probably died before the shameful multiplication of his harem. Whether she became a proselyte to Judaism we do not know, but at any rate Solomon was not turned aside by her to build a temple for any deity of Egypt. The national conscience, however, was never entirely reconciled to this departure from theocratic traditions. "When Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh," says the Talmud, "Gabriel descended and fixed a reed in the sea. A sandbank formed around it, upon which the mighty city of Rome was subsequently built."<sup>3</sup> The meaning, I suppose, is that at the moment of his sin began the series of events which after long centuries destroyed his people by Roman vengeance, and made of Jerusalem and the Temple a heap of desolation.

As regards the other foes, Hadad was little more than a marauder, and Rezon was probably crippled by Solomon's conquest of Hamath.<sup>4</sup> Solomon, in consequence of his own confidence in the Divine establishment of his power was now king as far as the Euphrates on the east, and as far as the river of Egypt on the south. The Second Psalm remains as a triumphant epinician ode in which he, or a poet of the time speaking in his name, gives thanks to God who has made him triumph over his enemies, and in which he uses the large, prophetic style of utterance which only acquires its full significance when we regard Solomon in his better aspects as the type of the Perfect King of David's line who should rule in righteousness over all mankind.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. S. Poole, "Dictionary of the Bible," s.v. Shishak, dates his accession from Egyptian sources *circ.* 983.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus says ("Antiq." viii. 6, § 2) that after his time (when the Bubastite dynasty began) Egyptian kings dropped the exclusive title of Pharaoh, and were known by their own names. According to Brugsch, "Gesch. Ägypt." 657, the name of Psusennes on the monuments was *Pisebskhan*. But see *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Sanhedrin f. 21. 2.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 3.



## NOTE ON THE PHARAOH OF I KINGS III. I.

It appears from the Egyptian monuments that the twenty-first, or Tanite dynasty of Egyptian kings was founded by Hir-hor, an ambitious priest of Amon at Zoan (Tanis) about B.C. 1100. For the most part (the annals of Egypt during the reigns of these kings are a blank. Hir-hor raised himself to power by driving out Rameses XIII. (?), when the country had sunk into moral and intellectual degeneracy. The names of his successors on the monuments are (according to Brugsch) Piankhi, Pinotem I., Piseb-khan I., Pinotem II. The names seem to be Assyrian, and Hir-hor probably made an alliance with Assyria. But the house of Rameses still had adherents, and Pinotem I. married a princess of that family. After about one hundred and thirty years (B.C. 1100-975) Shashanq I. founded the dynasty of Bubastis (Pibeseth, Ezek. xxx. 17), and strengthened himself by marrying a daughter of the last Tanite king. See Brugsch, "History of Egypt from the Monuments," ii. 200-214 (E. tr.) ; Rawlinson, "Ancient Egypt," vol. ii. ch. xxiii. pp. 412-416 ; Lenormant, "Hist. Anc." vol. i. p. 304.



## CHAPTER VI.

### SOLOMON'S SACRIFICE AND DREAM.

**General** peacefulness of Solomon's reign—He offers a tenfold hecatomb at Gibeon—His dream—Modes of Divine communication—His prayer for wisdom—The ideal not perfect—A conditional promise—Great sacrifice on Mount Zion—The dead and the living child—Nature of Solomon's wisdom—The wisest man of his age—His proverbs and songs, and other intellectual efforts—Riddles—Hiram and Abdemon.

It is not possible to discover the exact order of events in Solomon's reign ; but it is probable that the inaugural sacrifice with which he celebrated the secure establishment of his throne was not offered until God had given him some peace before the face of his enemies. That peace was lasting. He was not again seriously troubled till towards the close of his reign of forty years.

Accordingly, when his vigour and self-reliance had struck terror into all opponents, he went in solemn procession to the High Place at Gibeon, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and offered the enormous sacrifice of a thousand burnt-offerings on the venerable altar which Bezaleel had constructed nearly five centuries before.<sup>1</sup> The splendour of this tenfold hecatomb illustrated the magnificence of his conceptions as one who intended to be every inch a king ; and while it showed his sense of grati-

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Chron. i. 2, 3. For going to Gibeon, the chief seat of the national worship, served by the entire priesthood, Solomon is certainly not to blame. Where it is said (1 Kings iii. 3) that he "loved the Lord . . . only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places," the phrase expresses the view of later centuries. The implicit prohibition of Lev. xvii. 3-5 could hardly apply to a time when the Ark was at Zion and the Tabernacle at Gibeon ; and high places, in the absence of a regular temple, were sanctioned by prophets and priests alike. Perhaps the *Wady Suleiman* may retain a trace of Solomon's visit to Gibeon.



tude for God's protection, it would also powerfully influence the imagination of the people and prepare them for the religious development by which the reign was to be marked.<sup>1</sup>

And there at Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream of the night. The consultation of Urim and Thummim seems to have fallen into desuetude after the days of David, and about this time there occurred a marked cessation of prophetic activity. We never read that Solomon, like his father, inquired of the Lord by the high priest. To a certain extent he was his own priest, and he seems to have offered some of his burnt-offerings with his own hand. The prophetic work of Nathan and Gad was finished, and Ahijah of Shiloh had not yet risen into prominence. Dreams were the third—and indeed the lowest—order of Divine communications. In a dream God bids Solomon to choose some sign of His favour, and Solomon, in accordance with the whole tendency of his character, asks for kingly wisdom. He is but “a little child,” probably not more than twenty years of age,<sup>2</sup> and cannot compare himself with his father David—a warrior, a poet, a statesman, a king trained by long and varied experience. Israel had grown into a mighty and countless people, and Solomon prays for an understanding heart that he may be enabled in his constant functions of a judge to discern between good and evil.<sup>3</sup>

His prayer was pleasing to God, for it was noble and unselfish. A man of smaller mind might have asked for riches, or glory, or success in war; and specially—considering the vagueness and dimness of ancient views about immortality—for length of days. And God, to reward his better choice, promised him in pre-eminent measure the gift of a wise and understanding heart, and gave him in addition the riches and honour which he had not directly sought. He had shown something of the spirit

<sup>1</sup> The sacrifice of 1,000 victims was sufficiently known to give rise in later Greek (Julian and Eustathius) to the word *χιλιόμβη*, for what the LXX. calls *χιλίαν ὀλοκαύτωσιν*. Xerxes offered 1,000 at Troy (Herodotus, vii. 43), and Cræsus 3,000 (Herodotus, i. 50).

<sup>2</sup> In 1 Chron. xxix. 1; 1 Kings iii. 7, he is called “young and tender” at his accession. But the phrase, “I am a child,” was more or less proverbial (Jer. i. 6).

<sup>3</sup> See James i. 5; Wisdom vii. 7, ix. 12. The importance of the king's judicial functions in the days when he was both the judge and the jury is illustrated in the training of Cyrus (Xen. “Cyrop.” i. 3 § 16; comp. 1 Sam. viii. 20; 2 Sam. xv. 2-4).



which seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and therefore all other things were added unto him. The promise of length of days was, however, made conditional on Solomon's continued faithfulness, and he forfeited its fulfilment by his subsequent apostasies. He reigned forty years, but died at the age of sixty, and did not attain the age of his father.<sup>1</sup> The conditions on which the gift of "wisdom" were made to depend might have served to Solomon as a warning that his ideal of wisdom was not as yet the highest—that all wisdom begins and ends in the fear of the Lord; that without holiness the gift of earthly prudence and political insight and varied knowledge are of no permanent avail.

Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream.<sup>2</sup> But he felt that it was a Divine dream; and in sign of his gratitude he went from Gibeon to the altar on Mount Zion, and stood before the Ark, and offered fresh burnt-offerings and thank-offerings, and made a great feast to all his servants.<sup>3</sup>

The instance which the historian gives us of Solomon's wisdom is exactly of a kind which would have taken the fancy of an Eastern people.

Two harlots came to the king as he sat in the gate to decide all causes. They brought with them two infants, one living and one dead, and each of them claimed the living child as her own. It was a case of conflicting testimony, which to many might have seemed impossible to decide. Solomon at once decided it by a flash of intuitive sagacity. He ordered one of his soldiers to cut the living child in two, and give half to each of the women.<sup>4</sup> Then the passionate cry of the mother's heart, "O my lord, give her the living child and by no means slay it," revealed at once to whom the child belonged. "Give her the living child and by no means slay it"—the king meditatively repeated the mother's words, and then burst forth with swift decision—"She is the mother thereof."

But Solomon's fame for wisdom was founded on far richer and wider endowments than this swift practical sagacity, this "dis-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Wisdom iv. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxxvii. 2, "God given to *His beloved* even sleeping."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings iii. 15. This is not mentioned in the Book of Chronicles.

<sup>4</sup> See Suet. Claud. 15. Josephus says that he ordered the *two children* to be divided between the mothers, and that the people at first laughed at his simplicity. See Ambrose, "De Off." ii. 8.



cernment to understand judgment." God gave him "wisdom" in a higher significance. He had at least a partial sense of the relation in which man stands to God, and man to man; of the wisdom which begins with righteousness, and regards it as the highest end of life to depart from evil. He had an "understanding exceeding much," in which is included intellectual power, and "wisdom for a man's self;" and "largeness of heart even as the sand that is on the sea-shore;" that is, an infinite thirst for knowledge, and capacity for attaining it. Egypt<sup>1</sup> and Arabia and Chaldæa were famed as the homes of wisdom, but neither Egypt, nor Arabia, nor Chaldæa had produced any men whose learning and insight were equal to those of Solomon. He surpassed all the children of the East.<sup>2</sup> All the surrounding nations heard his fame. He was wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. Ethan and Heman, the Ezrahites, were celebrated as poets and musicians.<sup>3</sup> Heman is called "the king's seer in the words of the Lord,"<sup>4</sup> and the Eighty-eighth Psalm remains in all its depth and beauty to attest his powers of inspired thought and expression. Chalcol and Darda<sup>5</sup> seem also to have taken large share in the organization of the Temple services with its psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Perhaps the words "sons of Mahol" refer to all four of the persons mentioned, and it is not impossible that they are thus meant to be described as "sons of the choir," or sacred singers.<sup>6</sup> But none of the four could be

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xli. 8; Exod. vii. 11; Acts vii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Job i. 3; Matt. ii. 1. These *Benî Kedem* seem to be the nomad tribes of Arabia and Mesopotamia. (See Gen. xxix. 1; Judg. vi. 3, 33, vii. 12). It is interesting to find this frank recognition of Ethnic wisdom and inspiration from which that of Solomon differed not in kind, but in degree.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chron. ii. 6, xv. 19; Ps. lxxxviii. title, xxxix. title. Ezrahite seems to be a mere transposition of Zerahite. They were descendants of Zerah, the son of *Judah*. If so, however, they cannot be identified with the *Singers* and *Levites* of 1 Chron. vi. 44. There seems then to have been two Hemans, and two Ethans, except on the not impossible supposition that Heman the Levite (Kohathite) married a heiress of the house of Zerah, and was reckoned in Zerah's genealogy.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Chron. xxv. 5.

<sup>5</sup> For Chalcol and Dara (Darad, or Darda), see 1 Chron. ii. 6, where they are great-grandsons of Jacob, by the line of Zerah, son of Judah, and brothers of Ethan and Heman.

<sup>6</sup> It is true that *Machôl* means "a dance" rather than "a choir," but in Ps. cl. 4, it may perhaps be used for an instrument of music; and Rashi



compared to Solomon. Of the extensive literature which tradition assigns to him but little remains. Of his three thousand Proverbs only a handful are preserved, and they contain scarcely any allegories or riddles, or passages of figurative poetry, but chiefly the sententious antithetic apothegms which preserve in the memory the results of experience, and the lessons of insight. Of his thousand and five songs <sup>1</sup> there is only one which, with the exception of two psalms,<sup>2</sup> has been even traditionally ascribed to him. Besides these songs and proverbs, he spoke, we are told, of the trees, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop of the wall; and of beasts, and fowl, and creeping things, and fishes. It is a matter of conjecture whether this passage refers to a dawning knowledge of natural history and botany, or whether it merely implies a poetic admiration of all that is beautiful in nature, and skill in the application of it to moral instruction or religious parable.<sup>3</sup> Of this skill we find traces not only in the "Wisdom literature" assigned to his authorship, but also—and that with exquisite freshness—in some of the Psalms.<sup>4</sup>

Various forms of veiled and pregnant speech known as "riddles" and "dark sayings" were also much cultivated in this epoch of literature. Riddles have always played an important part in the story of the East. Josephus preserves a curious tradition that Solomon, and Hiram, king of Tyre, challenged each other to trials of skill in this form of "wisdom"—inability to read the riddle being acknowledged by pecuniary fines.<sup>5</sup> At first Hiram was entirely defeated in this intellectual contest, but at last he discovered a Tyrian youth named Abdemon, of great natural gifts, by whose assistance he successfully encountered, and even defeated, his royal ally.

says that these four "were skilled in composing hymns, which were recited in the dances of song." See Dr. W. Aldis Wright, s.v. in "Dictionary of the Bible." Comp. "daughters of song," Eccles. xii. 4. Grätz says that these four were descendants of Chamul, son of Pharez, and that מְחֹלִים is only a transposition of מְחֹלִים (Numb. xxvi. 21).

<sup>1</sup> The LXX. says 5,000 songs.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxxv., cxxvii. The eighteen apocryphal "Psalms of Solomon" belong to the age of the Maccabees.

<sup>3</sup> Eccles. xlvii. 17. Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 2, § 5; *καθ' ἑκαστον γὰρ εἶδος δένδρου παραβολὴν εἶπεν*. On the nature of Solomon's wisdom see Hooker, "Eccl. Pol." III. viii. 9; Bacon, "Adv't. of Learning," book i.

<sup>4</sup> See Renan, "Hist. des Langues Sémitiques," p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Theophilus in Eusebius, "Præp. Ev." ix. 34, § 19.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE COURT OF SOLOMON.

Growing complexity and magnificence of the Court—High officers—Azariah grandson of Zadok—Use of the word “Priest”—The two Scribes—The Recorder—The Captain of the Host—Zadok—*Bamoth* or High Places—The Farmer-general—“The King’s friend”—The Chamberlain, growing importance of this official—The Superintendent of the levies—Forced labour—The twelve districts to supply the Court—Significance of these districts—Judah possibly exempted—Immense exaction of provisions—The burden not felt at first—Prevailing peace—Solomon’s one conquest.

THE fourth chapter of the First Book of Kings shows how vast a stride the Jewish monarchy had taken during the reign of David. Saul had been a king of primitive simplicity, content with a humble and modest royalty, dwelling under the pomegranate tree in the Precipice,<sup>1</sup> or under the tamarisk in the High Place at Gibeah,<sup>2</sup> carrying his great spear in his hand, and often with no larger army about him than a few faithful henchmen. David, in his later years, had surrounded himself with something of the state of other monarchies, but his harem and his palaces were insignificant compared with those of Solomon, who in his splendour and magnificence followed the dubious model of Egyptian, Phœnician, and Assyrian kings.

He was surrounded by an immediate circle of high officers, who held the rank of princes (*sarim*), and ate at his table. In David’s warlike Court the highest rank was assigned to the Captain of the Host, and the Captain of the Bodyguard. In

<sup>1</sup> Authorized Version, “in Migron” (1 Sam. xiv. 2).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xxii. 6.



Solomon's Court precedence is assigned to more peaceful functionaries.

First among them was Azariah, the "son," or rather the grandson of Zadok,<sup>1</sup> who is called the "Priest."<sup>2</sup> He certainly did not *supersede* either Zadok or Abiathar, but he had probably succeeded to the office of Chief Priest by his father's death. It has been supposed that the priestly title is given to him in the older sense in which it is given to the sons of David, for whose title of "priests"<sup>3</sup> the Chronicler substitutes the explanation "chief about the king."<sup>4</sup> Even David on certain occasions wore the ephod, so Azariah—being of priestly birth—might no doubt have performed sacerdotal duties connected with the palace. There is, however, no need for the supposition here, for it is obvious that the clause, "this is he that executed the priest's office in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem," in 1 Chron. vi. 10 has been accidentally misplaced, and applies to the grandson of Zadok, not to the son of Johanan.

Next to him were two "Scribes"—Elihoreph and Ahiah—sons perhaps of the Sheva (probably the same as Seraiah), who had been scribe to David.<sup>5</sup> They seem to have acted as Secretaries of State, and the extension of Solomon's power made it necessary to employ the services of two, whereas hitherto one had sufficed.

Next to these came Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, the "Recorder" or "Remembrancer," who had held the same office in the reign of David.<sup>6</sup> This necessity for an officer to act as

<sup>1</sup> Zadok, *Ahimaaz*, Azariah.

<sup>2</sup> The Septuagint omits the title, which perplexed the translators. We find, however, that even in David's time there seems to have been an approximation between the royal and priestly functions, and the development of this connection was probably strengthened by Phœnician influences (Movers, "Phönizier," p. 548). In 2 Sam. viii. 18, we are told that "David's sons were *priests*."

<sup>3</sup> *Kohanim*, 2 Sam. viii. 18; LXX., "chief courtiers;" Syriac, "magnates;" but it is strange to render the same word in two quite different senses in two lines.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "the first at the king's hand."

<sup>5</sup> See 2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25. In 1 Chron. xviii. 16, he is called Shavsha. Grätz (i. 245) calls the scribe (*Sopher*) "Listenführer," or "Rottenführer über den Heerbann." The Rabbis derived the title from *saphar*, "to count." Comp. Isa. xxxiii. 18. See Grätz's learned note (i. 457).

<sup>6</sup> 2 Sam. viii. 16, xx. 24; 1 Chron. xviii. 15. LXX., ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπομνημά-



annalist, or royal historiographer, is another indication of the growing importance of the Jewish throne.

Benaiah was promoted to the captaincy of the host left vacant by the execution of Joab. The present text of the Book of Kings would lead us to suppose that he also continued to be Captain of the Bodyguard. It would, however, have been dangerous to the stability of the throne to concentrate two such offices in the hands of one man. The Captain of the Bodyguard was more than ever needed as a counterpoise to any military ambition which might be kindled in the breast of the Commander-in-chief. It is probable, therefore, that a sentence preserved in the Greek translation represents the original reading, and that Eliab, the son of Shaphat, replaced Benaiah in the command of the Cherethites and Pelethites.

Zadok, as long as he lived was the Chief Priest, but as in the analogous case of Annas in the days of our Lord, the disgrace of Abiathar, by the civil power, did not obliterate the memory of his long priesthood, and he was still regarded as being one of the titular heads of the priesthood during the remainder of his life.

There was no longer a famous shrine at Gibeon, but the worship at the High Places still continued for ages after the Temple was built. It was too deeply rooted in the national customs to be got rid of, and it was only after centuries of struggle that Hezekiah ventured upon a step, which was regarded by many as revolutionary and impious, in destroying the High Places altogether.<sup>1</sup> It is quite certain that neither Solomon nor any of his predecessors were conscious of any dereliction of duty in sanctioning the continuance of local sanctuaries.<sup>2</sup> If the prohibition of Deuteronomy was then in existence, it was clearly unknown to the majority of the nation.<sup>3</sup> It was only in later times that the toleration of these *Bamoth* came to be looked upon as a blot—though a venial blot—on the memory of even the holiest kings.

των; Isa. xxxvi. 3, ὁ ὑπομνηματογράφος. Comp. Suet., "Aug," 79, "Qui e memoriâ Augusti." *Mazkhir*, or "Chancellor." Grätz ("Gesch. d. Juden." i. 459) calls him "Erinner." See Ezek. xxi. 24; xxix. 16.

<sup>1</sup> See the remark of the apostate Rabshakeh, 2 Kings xviii. 22; 2 Chron. xxxii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Judg. vi. 20, xiii. 19; 1 Sam. ix. 12, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xii. 13, 14.



The post of Superintendent, or Farmer-general, over the twelve heads of local administration was held by Azariah, the son of Nathan; and his brother Zabud was also a "*kohen*," and "the king's friend." It has been assumed too hastily that the Nathan here intended was the Prophet, and that the high promotion of his two sons indicates that he had sunk into courtly proclivities, which hampered the outspoken faithfulness of his earlier days. But Nathan is rarely mentioned without his title of "the Prophet," and it is at least as probable that Azariah and Zabud were sons of Nathan, the brother of Solomon, and therefore nephews of the king. It is true that Nathan was either younger than Solomon or only a little older, so that his sons must have been very young men. But it must be remembered that this list does not entirely apply to the early part of the reign. As we find Solomon's sons-in-law in it, we may easily find his nephews. It was necessary to provide maintenance, and occupation, and high official rank for the members of the royal family. The title "Priest" in its lay sense, or *civil* sense, seems only to have been given to the princes of the house of David. If this conjecture be correct, it is another indication of the often renewed attempt to unite kingly and priestly functions. This cannot surprise us, since it began, even in the previous reign, and seems to have been borrowed from the Phœnicians. It was a direct means of strengthening the royal house and the Court party.<sup>1</sup> Solomon had no intention of allowing Zadok to become a priest of the kind that kings have had to cope with in all ages from the days of Ethbaal down to those of Thomas à Becket. We shall see that, even in the most solemn details of the Temple inauguration, Solomon is everything, and Zadok or his successor sinks into such complete insignificance that his name is not once mentioned during the entire ceremony.

The Secretary and the Recorder were permanent officials in the royal establishment, and to them we must add a new and important functionary—the Chamberlain, or High Steward, who was "over the household." The existence of such an

<sup>1</sup> See Movers, "*Phönizier*," p. 548. We may recall the facts that "*Bishop of Osnaburgh*" was even in this century the title of one of our princes; and that Charles II., on his deathbed, is said to have pronounced the blessing over his own bishops.

<sup>2</sup> Nearly three centuries later, in the Court of Hezekiah, we read of



officer to regulate the admissions to the king, the management of the palace; and the etiquette of the Court, shows that the more primitive form of royalty was now being rapidly assimilated to the statelier usages of the great surrounding kingdoms. As the form of government became more and more personal, the Chamberlain, from his right of immediate access to the king, became the most important personage in the affairs of government, just as the eunuchs were often the chief ministers in the Courts of the Byzantine Emperors.

The function of the last great official on the list is somewhat ominous. Such splendour as that of Solomon could not be maintained except at the cost of heavy taxation. We now find, almost for the first time, an officer who "was over the tribute," or rather "the Levy," that is, the *corvée* or forced labour.<sup>1</sup> This office was held by Adoniram or Adoram, the son of Abda. Under Saul there had been an overseer of the flocks, and David had been obliged to appoint a custodian of the king's treasures, and stewards who managed his pastures, vineyards, olives, sycomores, camels, herds, and flocks.<sup>2</sup> If David's numbering of the people had been due to an intention of subjecting them to a poll-tax, something like this must have been actually carried out under the government of Solomon. The people began to discover too late that "bondage with ease" is not to be compared to "strenuous liberty." In tribute, and proscription for various kinds of compulsory service, the people were now beginning to feel the burden of monarchy, of which they had been so emphatically warned by their indignant prophet.<sup>3</sup> Adoram must have had a long spell of toil under David and Solomon; at the beginning of Rehoboam's reign, when he must have been an old man, his unpopular office cost him his life.

For the Court of Solomon, with its polygamy, and the multi-

"Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the Scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the Recorder." The Chamberlain has now become the *chief* official (2 Kings xviii. 18; comp. Isa. xxii. 15, where Shebna is a person of great and objectionable influence).

<sup>1</sup> He is said to be "*al-ha-Mas*." He is cursorily mentioned in 2 Sam. xx. 24, which refers to the closing years of David. The word *Mas*, "levy," is of dubious derivation.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. xxvii. 25-31.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. viii. 11-18.



tude of its retainers, soldiers, and eunuchs,<sup>1</sup> must have consisted of some thousands of persons, and their maintenance was very costly. To secure a due provision of food and delicacies for the palace, the king appointed twelve officers, one for each month of the year; and each was bound to furnish the requisite contributions in kind and money from one of the twelve districts into which the land was divided.<sup>2</sup> The importance of their position may be estimated from the fact that two of them were sons-in-law of Solomon, married to his daughters Taphath and Basmath, of whom we hear nothing farther.<sup>3</sup> In the division of districts we find Mount Ephraim, three sections of the maritime plain, the plain of Jezreel, Asher, Issachar, Naphtali, Benjamin, and three sections of the country east of the Jordan. The districts seem, however, to have been formed with very little reference to ancient tribal limits, which were scarcely likely to find favour in schemes of monarchical centralization. The object of the whole arrangement was mainly the somewhat ignoble one of supplying the inexhaustible expenses of a luxurious Court. It was very remarkable that Judah does not seem to have been included in the division, though it occupied so large a portion of Palestine. It is difficult to suppose that so obscure a place as Sochoh<sup>4</sup> could have been intended as the tax station for

<sup>1</sup> That the degraded service of eunuchs in the royal harem must have been introduced by this time seems clear if the word *sarîsîm* be taken literally in 1 Sam. viii. 15; 1 Chron. xxviii. 1. There could have been no more ominous proof of commencing decadence and faithlessness.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the exactly similar arrangement in the courts of ancient and modern Persia (Herodotus, i. 692; Chardin, "Voy. en Perse," iii. 345). It is curious that some of the officers are not named, but only called by their patronymic, "*the son of Hesed*," &c. This is probably due to an accidental mutilation of the original document, for names are given by Josephus. If we accept the conjecture (suggested by the LXX., καὶ Νασέφ εἰς ἐν γῆ 'Ιούδα), and add "in the land of *Judah*" to 1 Kings iv. 19 (taking Judah from ver. 20), there would be thirteen instead of twelve of these Netzibim. The Targum adopts this reading, and says that the thirteenth deputy was "to maintain the king in the *intercalary* month."

<sup>3</sup> The allusion is, however, a proof that this organization could not have been fully established till Solomon was far advanced in his reign. The husband of Taphath—the son of Abinadah—may have been Solomon's first cousin (1 Sam. xvi. 8).

<sup>4</sup> There were two Sochohs. The one here meant bordered on Philistia. Grätz says, "Auffallend ist besonders dass über Juda kein Nezib gesetzt zu sein scheine."



Judah. Had Judah, then, an immunity from the burden of this impost? If so, the exemption was most impolitic, and could not have failed to exacerbate the existing jealousies. An interesting notice informs us of the immense stores required by the household for a single day—namely, thirty cors of fine flour, sixty cors of meal, ten stall-fed and twenty pasture-oxen, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, roebucks, fallow-deer, and fowls. Taking the *cor* at one of its lower valuations, this seems to imply as much as 18,000 lbs. of bread a day; and considering how little meat is required in the East, we should conjecture that the maintenance would be enough for at least ten thousand persons.<sup>1</sup> Solomon also collected a large force of chariots and chariot-horses (*susim*), and he had twelve thousand horsemen, and swift horses for the royal couriers,<sup>2</sup> requiring a large provision of straw and barley. They were kept in various cities and barracks. In the intoxication of personal grandeur, the old dislike to cavalry and chariots was forgotten, and the old injunctions—as Samuel had prophesied would be the case—were set aside.<sup>3</sup> But there must have been many who looked on this innovation with dislike. They did not care to see “the chariots of Pharaoh” in the Court of Solomon,<sup>4</sup> remembering that “a horse is a vain thing to save a man,” and that God, who “delighteth not in the strength of a horse,” had enabled David with his simple infantry to defeat the immense cavalry of Hadarezer, as Barak had defeated Sisera before.

But it was not in the earlier years of the reign that the burden proved intolerable. On the contrary, the people at first enjoyed an immense prosperity, due to peace and extended commerce. They lived in festivity and ease, and exulted in the power of their king, whose dominion was acknowledged from Tiphseh on the west bank of the Euphrates<sup>5</sup> to Gaza and the

<sup>1</sup> Thenius says the flour would daily feed fourteen thousand. As many or more were daily fed by the kings of Persia.

<sup>2</sup> Not “dromedaries,” as in Authorized Version. Comp. Esth. viii. 10, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xvii. 16; 1 Sam. viii. 11, 12; 2 Sam. viii. 4; Josh. xi. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Cant. i. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Tiphseh, or Thapsacus, was afterwards attacked by Menahem (2 Kings xv. 16). It was the ford (*pasach*, “to pass over”) of the Euphrates; Xen., “Anab.” i. 4, § 11; Arrian, “Exp. Alex.” ii. 13, iii. 7. Its site is believed to be the modern *Suriyeh*. The phrase “on *this* side the river,” literally is, “*beyond* the river” (1 Kings iv. 24), and furnishes a curious proof that the passage was not composed *till the days of the Exile*; the western bank of the river being described from the Babylonian point of view.



Mediterranean ; and from Damascus to the "stream of Egypt," *i.e.*, Rhinokolura (the Wady el Areesh). They were proud that his mere name was sufficient to protect them from all their enemies. It was only by slow degrees that the glamour of success was dissipated, and the nation began to realize the burden of oppression. At this time the general community below the Court officials and princes consisted of four classes of persons. These were, in descending degrees of dignity—

1. The freeborn Israelites (*ezrach*, Exod. xii. 49, &c.), whose burdens were made as light as possible.

2. The native Canaanites, who were in vassalage to the Crown, and were sufficiently numerous to be sometimes formidable (*Toshabîm*, Lev. xxii. 23, &c.).

3. The strangers—like the Athenian *Metoikoi* or "resident aliens"—whom commerce or other influences had drawn into the country, and who generally placed themselves under special protection (*Gerîm*, Lev. xvii. 8, &c.).<sup>1</sup>

4. Slaves of three classes, namely either—

(1) Slave taken in war ; or

(2) One who had sold himself into slavery in consequence of poverty or debt.

(3) One born in the house (*verna*, "the children of the maidservant").<sup>2</sup>

From the burden of war they were happily exempt. The raids of Hadad and Rezon did not give any serious trouble to the nation at large, and the only aggressive action taken throughout the reign was so transient that it is omitted altogether in the Book of Kings, and dismissed in a single line of the Second Book of Chronicles.<sup>3</sup> "Solomon," we are told, "went to Hamath-Zobah, and prevailed against it." Of further details we know absolutely nothing, and it has even been conjectured that Hamath-Zobah cannot mean the *great* Hamath on the Orontes, but must mean some other Hamath in the separate kingdom of Zobah. Since, however, Toi, king of Hamath, showed signs of weakness when he sent presents to David, Solomon may have had little difficulty in annexing his capital. It was reconquered for Israel by the warlike Jeroboam II. some two centuries after this date.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xxv. 44 ; see Grätz, i. 336. On the *toshabîm*, see Jahn, "Arch. Bibl." i. 11, § 181. They and the *gerîm* are rendered *προσοίκοι, προσήλυτοι, γειώρας*, in the LXX.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xiv. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings xiv. 28.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BUILDINGS OF SOLOMON.

The Temple—The design of David—He is forbidden to build—His immense preparations—In what sense the Temple was “exceeding magnificent”—Its substructions, walls, and cisterns, and the toil they involved—Embassy from Hiram of Tyre, and compact between the two kings—The levy or *corvée*—The burden-bearers and quarrymen—The Canaanites were the Helots of Palestine—The Giblites—The slaves of Solomon—Hiram of Naphtali—General form of the Temple and its measurements—Curious statements of the Chronicler—The Holy of Holies quite dark—Outer lattices of the Holy Place—The outer chambers—What a visitor would have seen—The outer court—The inner court—The brazen altar—The molten sea and the caldrons—Why the brazen oxen were permitted—The actual Temple—What was its external aspect?—Had it pillars within?—Jachin and Boaz—Theories about them—The Porch—The Sanctuary and its furniture—The Oracle; its door—The Ark—The Cherubim—Built in silence—The general workmanship—Time that it occupied in building—Organization of Levitic ministry—The Temple a symbol of God's Presence—The actual building not used for prayer or public worship—The sacrifices and what they involved—Water for ablutions—The Ceremony of Dedication—The old Tabernacle—The procession—Transference of the Ark to its rock—The staves—Splendour of the ceremony—The Cloud of Glory—Solomon's prayer; its spirituality—Stupendous thank-offering and festival—The fire from heaven—Prominence of the king in priestly functions—Second vision of Solomon—Intense affection and enthusiasm inspired by the Temple, and illustrated in various psalms—Functions of the Levites.

FIRST and foremost among the buildings of Solomon was the Temple on Mount Moriah, which was destined for so many centuries to exercise a profound influence on the religious conceptions of the Jewish people. As soon as there began to be



kings and palaces, it was felt incongruous that after so long a period the Ark of the Lord should still be housed in wood and in curtains.

For this Temple David had, "with much labour,"<sup>1</sup> made immense preparations, but he had not been permitted to carry out his cherished design.<sup>2</sup> The voice of Nathan did but interpret for him his own sense of religious fitness when it assigned the building of the House of God to a son, whose course should have been less chequered by moral failure, whose hands should have been less stained with blood.

Yet he did everything else which was possible to him. He collected stonemasons and artificers, and amassed—according to the Chronicler—100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, and brass and iron without weight, and cedar-trees in abundance, and onyx stones, and stones edged with antimony, and precious stones and lustrous marble.<sup>3</sup> The gold and silver is doubtless meant to include the contribution attributed to David out of his private property—namely, 3,000 talents of gold, and 7,000 talents of silver, and the free-will offerings of the princes—namely, 5,000 talents of gold, 10,000 *darics* and 10,000 talents of silver. The mention of *darics*—coins named after Darius—shows us that the author of these statements lived many centuries after the days of which he is speaking.<sup>4</sup> Even the smaller sums sound enormous, but the larger are manifestly due to that fatality of enormous exaggeration, which, whether due to corruption of the text or not, affects some of the numbers stated in the Books of Chronicles. Nothing can be more futile than the attempt to show that such a prince as David could have been able to amass gold—not to speak of the other treasures—which amounted in value, on the very lowest computation, to £120,000,000, and which, if the Jewish talent be meant, represented many thousands more than a billion pounds. At the very zenith of even Solomon's magnificence his annual revenue only reached the sum of six hundred and sixty-six talents. David no doubt had made the best pre-

<sup>1</sup> Not "in my trouble," as in Authorized Version (1 Chron. xxii. 14).

<sup>2</sup> The preparations are mentioned by the Chronicler (1 Chron. xxix. 6-9; 2 Chron. ii. 3-7), but the Book of Kings says nothing about them. See 1 Kings vi. 2 and 2 Chron. iii. 3. The wish and intention are recorded in 2 Sam. vii. 1-29.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chron. xxii.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Chron. xxix. 4.



parations in his power, but the scale of them must be measured by very different numbers.

Jewish tradition has accepted the most extravagant statements about the Temple of Solomon, yet sober and trustworthy documents prove that, though small, it was indeed for that age "exceeding magnificent." The substructions alone deserve to rank with the *Cloaca Maxima* at Rome and others of the greatest works of early ages. Mount Moriah, already a sacred locality from having been the supposed scene of Abraham's sacrifice, lies north-east of Mount Zion.<sup>1</sup> It had acquired recent and additional sacredness from the vision of the angel whom David had seen during the pestilence with his sword drawn over Araunah's threshing-floor.<sup>2</sup> The altar reared by David to commemorate his deliverance, marked the site of the future Temple, which might otherwise have been built on the loftier heights of the Mount of Olives. But the choice of this hallowed site caused immense difficulties. The sides of the hill were steep ; its summit was rough and of insufficient size for the fore-courts of the house. The entire sanctuary, with its two fore-courts, had to be made into a large square, which we may assume from the notices of Ezekiel to have been five hundred paces in length and in breadth.<sup>3</sup> These courts had to be supported by immense walls which have partly survived the ravages of so many conquests. The earliest of these — those on the east side—are doubtless the work of Solomon, though large additions were made by Joash and other later kings, until all the four sides were completed, and the original area of the summit much enlarged. The immense blocks of smooth and bevelled stone, of which some are 30 feet long and 7 feet high, and weigh more than 100 tons, are in the finest style of Cyclopean architecture, and are still the admiration of every traveller.<sup>4</sup> These walls were of astonishing height. Part of the old wall

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxii. 2. The site of the Temple is called Mount Moriah in 2 Chron. iii, 1 alone, but it says nothing about Abraham.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. xxii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xlii. 15-20 ; xlv. 2. Comp. Josephus, "Antiq." xv. 11, § 3 ; "De B. J." v. 5. The Rabbis say, "The mount of the Temple was five hundred yards square" ("Middoth," c. 2).

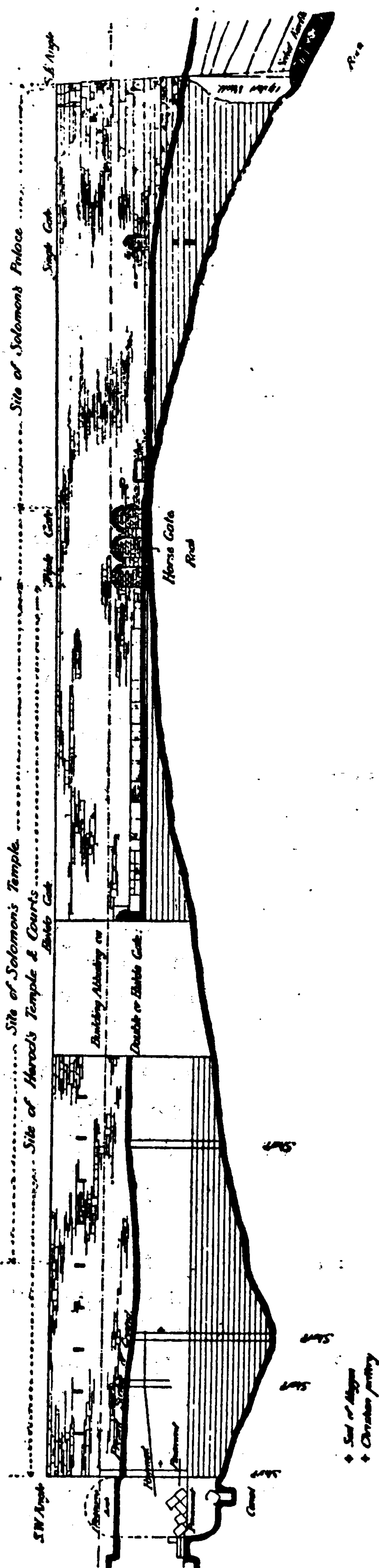
<sup>4</sup> The largest stone—that at the south-west corner—is 38½ feet long. According to Sir C. Warren, these huge blocks were hewn from a quarry *above the level of the wall*, and lowered by rollers down an inclined plane.



now rises 30 feet, but Captain Warren discovered that an even greater extent of its surface lies buried under the *débris* of ages, beneath the soil of the nineteen-times captured city.<sup>1</sup> The stone was partly hewn from those deep quarries, drains, and caverns, over which Jerusalem is built. Cisterns of immense capacity and subterranean conduits had also to be hewn out of the solid rock for the storage and conveyance of the water which was necessary to purge the profusion of refuse accumulated by countless sacrifices under the blazing Eastern sun.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus grossly exaggerates when he says that the eastern side was 450 feet high. Still, vast substructions were required to build the great level of the Temple area. Of the extent of these some estimate may be formed from the excavations of Sir C. Warren and Captain Wilson, described in "The Recovery of Jerusalem." At the south-east angle of the wall it descends to a depth of 80 feet below the present surface; and at the south-west angle by "Robinson's arch," no less than three pavements were discovered, showing the gradual filling up of the valley, on the lowest of which were found the fallen *voussoirs* of the arch. That the whole of this mighty wall was meant to be visible seems to be proved by the fact that the stones are carefully dressed, edge-drafted, and bevelled. See the appended diagram, and Bartlett's "Walks about Jerusalem," pp. 161-178. Williams, "The Holy City," pp. 315-362. Kugler, "Gesch. der Baukunst," 125 ff. (1855).

Diagram enlarged from the "Recovery of Jerusalem".





At a very early stage of his preparations, Solomon received an embassy from Hiram, king of Tyre, who had always been on the friendliest terms with David, and whose daughter Solomon is said to have married.<sup>1</sup> Hiram, as we learn from a fragment of Menander of Ephesus, preserved in Josephus, was the son of a king named Abibaal,<sup>2</sup> and had ascended the throne in early youth in B.C. 1001. He was in the eleventh year of his reign when Solomon, who had now been king for three years, entered into close relations with him. His alliance was of the utmost importance for the future commerce of Israel, and alone rendered possible the splendid buildings which now began to adorn Jerusalem. He reigned thirty-four years, and died at the age of fifty-three. He was succeeded by his son Baleazar, and his grandson Abdastartus;<sup>3</sup> and then after various sanguinary revolutions the throne was seized by Ethbaal, priest of Astarte, the father of Jezebel. When the Greek translators say that he sent his servants "to anoint" Solomon, the assertion must be due to some singular confusion, but it points to a close alliance between the kings who first raised Tyre and Jerusalem respectively to the zenith of their fame.

Solomon, welcoming the proffered friendship of the Tyrian king, begged him to allow his skilled workmen to hew cedar-trees and cypress-trees out of Lebanon, and Hiram in return for annual gifts of twenty thousand cors of wheat and barley, and twenty thousand "baths" of oil,<sup>4</sup> gave him large assistance. The labour involved was immense. The trees were sent down the heights of Lebanon by the process technically known as *schlittage*,<sup>5</sup> and thence by road or river to the sea-shore. Huge

<sup>1</sup> Tatian, "Orat. ad Græce," p. 171. Neither David nor Solomon seem to have considered that Hiram occupied a kingdom which had been intended to form part of "the Promised Land" (Numb. xxxiv. 6-8; Judg. i. 31).

<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting relic of this prince at Florence, a sardonyx with the inscription of "Abibaal." It represents a king with a high crown and staff, and in front of him a four-rayed star. (Duncker, ii. 264, E. tr.)

<sup>3</sup> Menander of Ephesus quoted by Josephus ("C. Apion." i. 18).

<sup>4</sup> This is the reading of the LXX. and Josephus in 1 Kings v. 11. Comp. 2 Chron. ii. 10. Josephus says that the official correspondence between the two kings was preserved in the Jewish and Tyrian archives. "Pure," or "beaten oil," i.e., oil extracted by beating the olives, not by the press, was the best kind. The Chronicler (2 Chron. ii. 10) adds barley and wine.

<sup>5</sup> Schlittage is still much used in the Vosges to carry trees down hill. They are pushed along an artificial path called *voutou*, made of rounded trunks.



rafts of the costly timber were thence floated by sea to Joppa, a hundred miles, and then with infinite toil were dragged about thirty-five miles up the steep and rocky roads to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> These works required a levy (*mas*), or "tribute of men" out of all Israel to the number of thirty thousand, who worked in relays of ten thousand for three months, of which one month was spent in Lebanon and two at home.<sup>2</sup> Adoniram was at the head of this army of soccage labourers, who were not *called* bondmen (a thing which had been expressly forbidden by the law of Lev. xxv. 39), though such they practically were.<sup>3</sup> Besides these there were no less than seventy thousand burden-bearers and eighty thousand quarrymen who were under the charge of three thousand six hundred officers.<sup>4</sup> These, according to the Chronicler, were bondslaves from the unextirpated remnants of the Canaanite races. They were in fact the helots of Palestine.<sup>5</sup> We may be very sure that, in being torn from their homes, to serve an alien king, for the purposes of an alien worship, in lives made bitter with hard bondage, there must have seethed in the midst of them a fearful spirit of sullenness, venting itself in curses, secret indeed, yet all the more deep and not unheard in heaven. An accidental allusion shows both the novelty and permanence of this body of slaves; for lowest of all among the exiles who returned from Babylon—lower even than the Nethinim, the posterity of the Gibeonites who had been doomed for ever to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water"—are 392 *hierodouloi*, or menial ministers who are called "sons of the slaves of Solomon," the dwindling and miserable remnant of that vast levy of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Twisleton mentions that the stone of St. Paul's, quarried in Portland, and sent to London round the North Foreland, had to go more than twelve times as far.

<sup>2</sup> The ill-omened word *Mas*, "tribute," or "task," was familiar to the Israelites in the history of their Egyptian bondage (Exod. i. 11).

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings v. 13. See 2 Chron. viii. 9, and 1 Kings ix. 22. (This passage is not in the LXX.)

<sup>4</sup> Three thousand three hundred in 1 Kings v. 16; but see 2 Chron. ii. 2-18. The number employed is far larger than that required for the most gigantic modern works, but it must be remembered that there were few inventions for saving human labour.

<sup>5</sup> In 1 Kings ix. 20-23 we have a statement that there were (apparently to build the cities, &c., in Palestine), five hundred and fifty overseers, which would imply some twenty-seven thousand five hundred workmen



serfs,<sup>1</sup> who in achieving these great works "laboured without reward, suffered without redress, and perished without pity."

For the skilled work the king had to rely on Sidonian artisans, among whom special mention is made of the Giblites, the people of Gebal or Byblos, which was north of Berytos, and nearest to the cedars of Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel long afterwards mentions the wisdom and artistic genius of this Phœnician community.<sup>3</sup> Even in Homer the Sidonians are famed for embroidered robes and skill in workmanship,<sup>4</sup> and Solomon asked for cunning workmen in gold and brass, in carving, engraving, and in blue and crimson.

In addition to so large a host of workers, others were employed in casting bronze in earthen moulds. This was done in the clay soil of the Jordan valley, between Succoth and Zarthan. The polishing and moulding of the bronze was beyond the skill of the Israelites, and for all this ornamental work the king had to borrow the services of another Tyrian, also named Hiram, who, though born at Tyre, was the son of a woman of Naphtali, and whose skill, like that of Michael Angelo, seems to have been serviceable for every branch of artistic work.<sup>5</sup> Three years, during which materials were being amassed, were needed before the work began.<sup>6</sup>

That the general character of the architecture was Phœnician we cannot doubt. Walls of huge stones roofed with cedar, planks of wood overlaid with gold, simplicity of outline, massiveness of structure, buildings and rooms in shape like cubes, cedar beams, upper storeys of light wood-work were characteristics of the buildings of Tyre as they were of Solomon's temple and palaces. From Tyre, too, came the use of curtains dyed in the scarlet juice of the trumpet-fish, and the dyes obtained from the purple-fish, crimson, purple, violet, and amethyst, which were so costly, because three hundred pounds of the fish were required to dye only fifty pounds of wool.

<sup>1</sup> Ezra ii. 55. LXX.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings v. 18, Authorized Version, "stone-squarers;" Vulgate, Giblii; LXX. (Alex.), καὶ οἱ Βίβλιοι.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xxvii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Hom., Il. vi. 290, xxiii. 743; Od. iv. 614.

<sup>5</sup> The expression "father" in 2 Chron. ii. 13, iv. 16, seems to mean "master-workman."

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings vi. 1; 2 Chron. iii. 1.



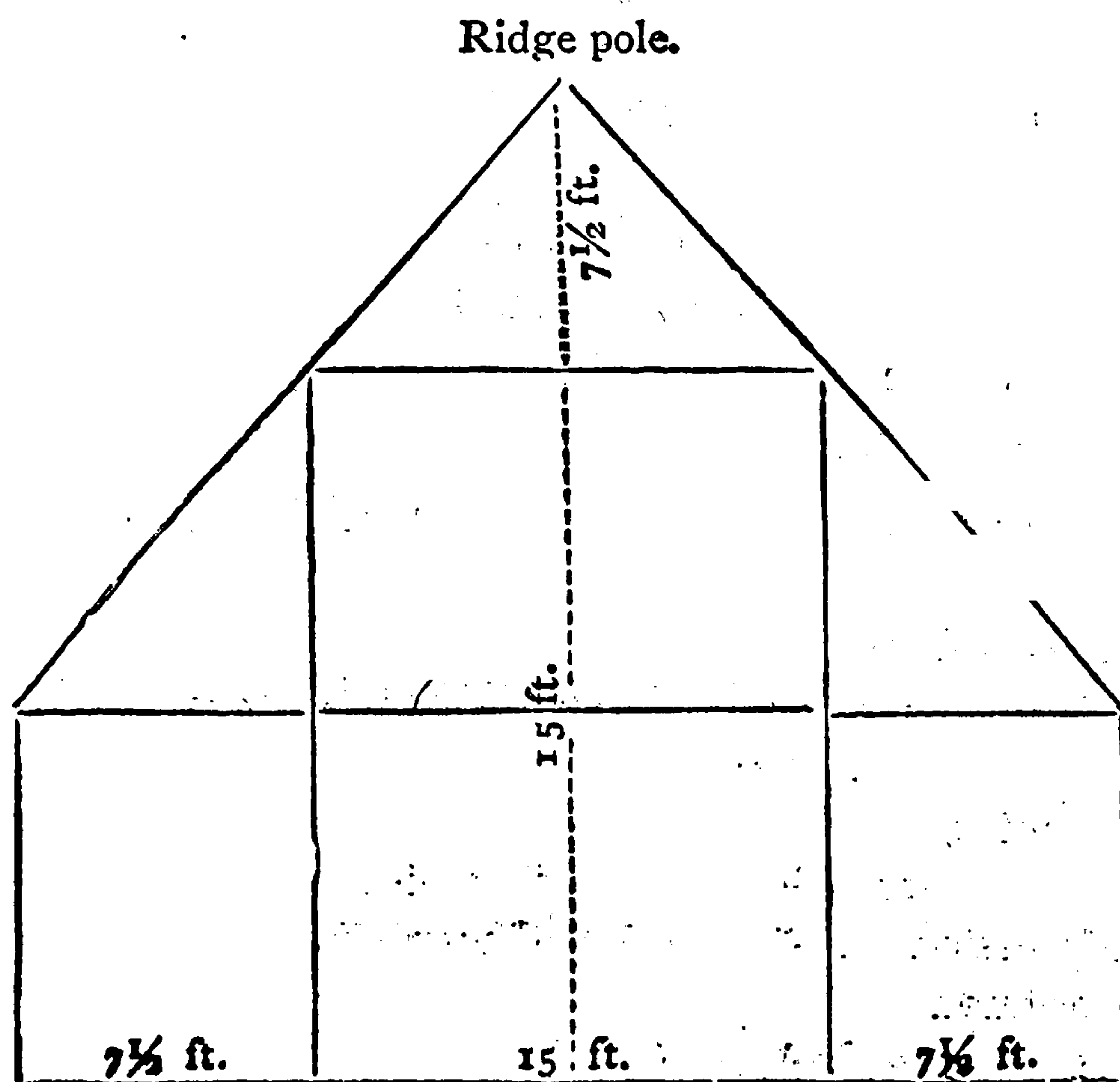
Volumes have been written about the Temples of Solomon and of Herod, but the very wide differences of view between competent inquirers prove conclusively that the data are insufficient to enable us to form any detailed conception of their appearance.

The general measurements are indeed tolerably certain, and they at once show us that the actual building was of very small size. The walls were very thick, and the spaces within them,<sup>1</sup> measured sixty cubits or 90 feet in length<sup>2</sup> from east to west, and twenty cubits or 30 feet in breadth from north to south. In height the main part of the building was thirty cubits or 45 feet. These numbers show that the dimensions of the Temple were meant to be exactly twice as large as those of the ancient Tabernacle, of which the general plan was scrupulously followed.<sup>3</sup> The cham-

<sup>1</sup> This is not expressly stated, but is inferred from various details.

<sup>2</sup> We have the high authority of Mr. Fergusson, "Temples of the Jews," p. 16, for saying that the assumption that a cubit = 18 inches meets all the chief difficulties.

<sup>3</sup> Wisd. ix. 8., "Thou hast commanded me to build a Temple in Thy Holy Mount, and an Altar in the city wherein Thou dwellest, *a copy* of the Holy Tabernacle which Thou didst before prepare from the beginning." Thus the Temple was 45 feet high, and probably the Tabernacle was 15 feet + a ridge of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet =  $22\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The doubling of the proportions will be better understood by this diagram of the Tabernacle which also shows that the side-chambers had their analogy in the old "Tent of Meeting."





bers upon the roof, if such there were, might seem to have implied a complete departure from the ancient model, but they may have been meant to occupy (by analogy), the space which must have intervened between the flat roof of the old Tabernacle, and the tent-like covering of the outer curtain which protected it. The Porch, too, represented the space between the actual entrance of the Temple and the ground overshadowed by the outer covering of skins.<sup>1</sup> This Porch extended along the whole breadth of the house, and was ten cubits deep from east to west. If the numbers given by the Chronicler be correct, it rose to the astonishing and altogether disproportionate height of 120 cubits or 180 feet. It would thus be four times loftier than the body of the house. This number is not mentioned in the Book of Kings, which does not say how high the Porch was. Neither the Temple of Venus (Astarte), at Paphos, represented on coins of Caracalla, nor any other, presented this astonishing disproportion; and as the Temple of Zerubbabel was sixty cubits high, and that of Herod one hundred and twenty cubits high, it is possible that the number may have been corrupted in course of time. The true height of the Porch was, in all probability, thirty cubits, or 45 feet, *i.e.*, it was of the same height as the house itself. This is what we should expect, as it was the case also in the Tabernacle. It may seem incredible that the Chronicler should have added together the thirty cubits of *each* side of the Porch, and so made it one hundred and twenty cubits high; but there does seem some ground for suspecting him of this extraordinary practice. Indeed, he admits it in the case of the wings of the Cherubim. For he first tells us that *the wings were twenty cubits long*, and then explains himself to mean that *each of the wings was five cubits long*.<sup>2</sup>

The Holy of Holies, the Shrine, or Oracle, was overlaid with pure gold, which expended the astonishing amount of six hundred talents.<sup>3</sup> As in the Tabernacle, it was a perfect cube,<sup>4</sup> and it was left in the mystery of unbroken darkness. This *need* not, indeed, have been the case, for it was twenty cubits high, and the three storeys of chambers which were built along its sides, were only fifteen cubits high. Thus there would have been room to let in latticework windows (like those of a cathedral

<sup>1</sup> See the pictures and plans of the Tabernacle by Fergusson in the "Dictionary of the Bible."

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Rev. xxi. 16.



clerestory) in the topmost five cubits. This, however, would have interfered with the awful sanctity of the shrine, wherein was shadowed forth the dwelling-place of God amid thick darkness. Nor was light a matter of necessity, for the Holiest Place was only entered once, and then only for a few moments, during the whole year. On the other hand, in the Holy Place or Sanctuary where incense was daily burnt on the golden table, and in which the Priests in their courses were daily employed in lighting or putting out the lamps, and placing or removing the shewbread, windows were indispensable both for light and ventilation.<sup>1</sup> They were made with narrow lights, *i.e.*, with crosswork lattices in the fifteen cubits of wall which rose above the chambers.<sup>2</sup> Two sides of the Temple were surrounded by three storeys of chambers. They are called side-chambers,<sup>3</sup> and they certainly ran the length both of the Holy and the Holiest Place. Whether they also enclosed the *end* of the Holiest Place seems doubtful. Each storey was five cubits high. The lowest storey was five cubits broad, the second six, and the third seven. The greater breadth of the upper storey was possible, because the wall of the house was thick enough to allow of rebatements of one and two cubits broad, in which the cedar floor of the chambers rested, without any holes for the joists in the sacred building.<sup>4</sup> A winding stair led up into the middle chamber of the middle storey, and thence into the upper storey. These chambers communicated with each other, and were, according to Josephus, thirty in number. They were useful for a multitude of purposes. It does not appear that they were ever inhabited, but they served as store-rooms for the priests' garments, and for the immense accumulations of Temple furniture.<sup>5</sup> The hangings and coverings of the old Tabernacle—of which we hear no more—were probably stored away in one of these rooms, which cannot have been mere cupboards, but must obviously have had windows on the outside. We are nowhere told the number or the length

<sup>1</sup> As in the old Tabernacle, the golden candlestick was only lit in the evening and put out in the morning.

<sup>2</sup> Authorized Version, "windows of narrow lights"; marg., "skewed and closed"; Revised Version, "windows of fixed lattice-work."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings vi. 5. Revised Version.

<sup>4</sup> Thus they were a sort of "lean-to."

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings vii. 51; 2 Kings xi. 10; 2 Chron. v. 1.



of these chambers, which, indeed, are not mentioned at all in the Book of Chronicles. Ezekiel says, "The side-chambers were three, one over another, and thirty in order." This seems to mean that there were thirty in all on the *sides* of the house, besides those (if any) at the end of the Oracle. Josephus seems to understand "thirty in order" as though it meant thirty times three, for he says there were *ninety* chambers. It is much more probable that there were three storeys of five chambers on each side, so that if there were any at the end there would be thirty-nine in all.

The splendour of the Temple consisted in the costliness of its materials. Every effort was made to build an abode which should be worthy of Jehovah's habitation as far as the resources and knowledge of that day permitted. But the art of the period was immature, and the resources of so small a kingdom were very limited compared with those of the Roman or Byzantine Empire. Justinian's boast, "I have vanquished thee, O Solomon," and the Khalif Oimar's boast as he pointed to the Dome of the Rock, "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here," might have been uttered by smaller potentates with equal arrogance and equal truth.

Let us try to represent what a visitor would have seen had he been permitted to wander into the sacred courts and buildings of this most celebrated of earthly shrines.

Passing through the thickly clustering houses of the Levites<sup>1</sup> and "the Porticoes,"<sup>2</sup> he might enter the Temple precincts by one of the numerous gateways mentioned in the Book of Chronicles and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> These gates were of wood, overlaid with brass. When he stood in the Outer Court he would have seen on one side of the Temple area a grove of trees—olives, palms, cedars, and cypresses—which added to the beauty of the building, but were afterwards abused for idolatrous purposes.<sup>4</sup> The Halls of Assembly in this court were the work

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. ix. 27.

<sup>2</sup> These porticoes (*Parbarim*) are rendered "suburbs" in 2 Kings xxiii. 11; comp. 1 Chron. xxvi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> "Two gates did Solomon construct devoted to acts of mercy. Through one gate the bridegrooms used to pass, through the other the mourners. The people on the Sabbath rejoiced with the bridegrooms and consoled the afflicted" (Sopherim).

<sup>4</sup> Ps. lii. 8; xcii. 13. There may be some dim reminiscence of fact in



of later times. In the Outer Court itself he would have seen no permanent structure, but morning and evening it would be crowded with worshippers and with Levites passing to and fro in their daily ministrations. To pass from the Outer Court into the court which Jeremiah<sup>1</sup> calls "the Higher Court," and which is usually known as "the Court of the Priests," the visitor would have had to pass up some steps, through an enclosure built with three rows of hewn stones surmounted by a cornice of cedar beams. Here he would have seen the great brazen Altar, which, indeed, was visible over the partition from the Outer Court. It was always intended that the people, standing in the Outer Court, should see the whole series of daily and festal ministrations and sacrifices which were conducted on their behalf by the sons of Aaron. It was a large structure covered with brass, and filled inside with earth and stones. It was forbidden to clamp these stones together with iron, because, as the Talmud says, iron is to shorten life, and the altar to prolong life.<sup>2</sup> It stood ten cubits high, the length and the breadth of it being twenty cubits.<sup>3</sup> On the south-eastern side the stranger would have admired the huge laver for the constant ablutions of the priests which was regarded as one of the finest specimens of the skill of Hiram of Naphtali. It was made of brass, and was known as the "brazen" or "molten sea." It had a length and breadth of thirty cubits, and stood five cubits high on the backs of twelve brazen oxen of the same height, of which three faced towards each quarter of the heavens.<sup>4</sup> It contained two thousand<sup>5</sup> "baths" of water. Its rim was in the form of a lily-blossom, and under this rim hung a garland of wild gourds in bronze to the number of three hundred, which the legend that Solomon planted in the Temple golden trees, which produced all manner of fruits, and withered at the approach of idolaters (Yoma, f. 21. 2).

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxvi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Middoth, iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Talmud the altar was on the line of demarcation between the districts of Judah and Benjamin (Yoma, f. 12. 1). The Gemarists referred to this as a fulfilment of the blessing to Benjamin in Deut. xxxiii. 12. We cannot tell whether it was of the form described in Ezek. xliii. 14-16. It was a new altar. What became of Bezaleel's old altar at Gideon is not stated.

<sup>4</sup> A similar vessel of stone, 30 feet in circumference, adorned with the image of a bull, lies among the fragments of Amathus in Cyprus (O. Müller, "Archäol." § 240. 4; Duncker, ii. 184).

<sup>5</sup> Or three thousand (2 Chron. iv. 5).



had been cast in two rows. It served as a great reservoir for all the requirements of purification, and smaller supplies of pure water could be carried wherever they were wanted in ten brazen cauldrons on wheels, of which five stood on the right of the Temple and five on the left. These, too, were adorned with cherubic emblems and "pensile garlands." There were no oxen under the laver of the Tabernacle (Exod. xxxviii. 8).<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the devout and instructed stranger might have asked with surprise whether these twelve brazen oxen were not so many violations of the strict terms of the Second Commandment, and whether the sanction of such "graven images" in the House of God was not a defiance of the express law of God? He would probably have been told in reply that a tacit exception had been made even by Moses in favour of the figures of the Cherubim, which were symbols of the Divine Presence, and that the idea of the Cherubim involved the fourfold attitudes of the ox, the eagle, the lion, and the man. It is certain, however, that this answer was not found *perfectly* satisfactory. Josephus says that Solomon "sinned and fell into error about the observation of the Laws" in supporting the molten sea with oxen, and in planting lions on the steps of the throne.<sup>2</sup>

There are four extant descriptions of Solomon's Temple. The most ancient and trustworthy is that found in the Book of Kings (v.-vii.). Later, but founded no doubt on early descriptions and documents, is that in the Second Book of Chronicles. The description of Josephus ("Antiq." viii. 3, §§ 7, 8) is mingled with all kinds of Rabbinic and apocryphal exaggerations. A fourth description is preserved by Eusebius<sup>3</sup> from the Greek historian Eupolemus. Of the value of this account we are unable to judge, because we do not know from what sources it was derived.

It is probable that the actual Temple stood on an elevated platform, like that which now rises 16 feet above the level of the ground, upon the centre of which lies the Sakhra rock, which gives its name of "Dome of the Rock" to the Mosque of Omar. The Temple of Herod, according to the Mishna, was entirely built on raised arches.<sup>4</sup>

We know that inside the Temple no stone was visible; all was of gilded cedar wood and olive and cypress wood variously carved,

<sup>1</sup> The reading "oxen" in 2 Chron. iv. 3 should probably be "wild-gourds," as in 1 Kings vii. 24.      <sup>2</sup> Josephus, "Antiq.," viii. 7, § 5.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, "Præp. Ev." ix. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Parah. iii. 3. 6.

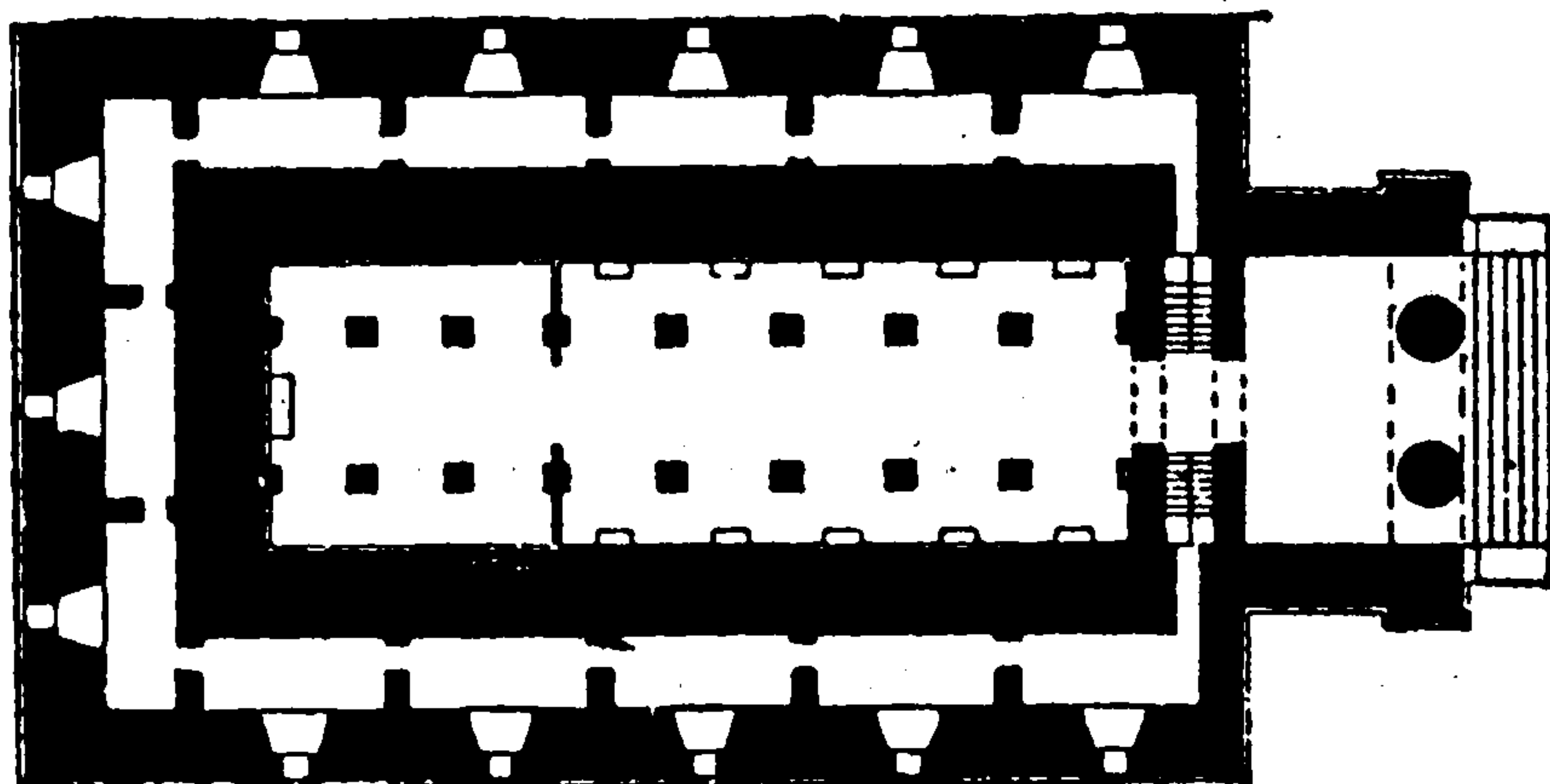


and tapestried in parts by purple and embroidered hangings. But what was the *external* aspect of the sacred building itself—"the joy of the whole earth"? Strangely enough our existing records leave us entirely in the dark on this point. In the works of later Rabbis we have glowing and highly imaginative descriptions of the aspect of the Third Temple, but even these are too vague to help our imagination. The outside of Solomon's Temple, and its general appearance, are left almost undescribed. We know that there was a richly-ornamented porch, but we do not even know with any certainty whether the building itself was covered with one level roof,<sup>1</sup> or whether, on the outside, as well as within, the Holy of Holies appeared to be of lower elevation. We do not know whether the roof was flat, or, as the Rabbis say, ridged. On the top of it there seem to have been some gilded upper chambers.<sup>2</sup> There can be no reasonable doubt that the roof of the old Tabernacle rose in a ridge, for otherwise the outer skins would have sunk down and torn the curtains, which, in case of a rainfall, might have been broken through altogether. It is true that the Temple was covered with beams and boards of cedar, but unless they were sloped to both sides, or supported by pillars, it would have been difficult to secure beams more than 30 feet long from becoming warped and sagged.<sup>3</sup> We know that on approaching it we should have seen a

<sup>1</sup> As Ewald thinks. He supposes that the space of ten cubits above the roof of the Holy of Holies was left quite empty, but that the roof of the Holy Place was prolonged to the end of the building (iii. 238).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 9. In 2 Kings xxiii. 12 we read of altars on the top of the upper chambers.

<sup>3</sup> This is the ground plan of Mr. Robins. It should be noticed that when Solomon is said to have made "*pillars* for the House of the Lord" (1 Kings x. 12), the words should be rendered "*rails*" or "*balustrades*" (Comp. 2 Chron. ix. 11).



Ground Plan:

Scale " ————— " of Cubits.



three-storeyed house, over which rose the lattice-perforated wall of the Temple itself; but, besides this uncertainty about the roof, we do not even know whether the outer surface was of stone, or whether it was over-laid with cedar wood, or with precious metals,<sup>1</sup> as the Chronicler seems to imply; nor whether it was ornamented or left blank. Nay, it has even been a matter of dispute whether the general character of the Temple was Greek, or Egyptian, or Phœnician; though the use of cedar beams and large blocks of stone hewn in squares, and joined without mortar, together with the whole history of the structure, seems to prove decisively that the style of architecture was borrowed directly from neighbouring Tyre.<sup>2</sup>

Approaching the Porch the eye would have been first caught by two superb pillars, which were regarded as being in those days a miracle of art, and which for unknown reasons received the names of Jachin (the name of a son of Simeon in Numb. xxvi. 12) and Boaz, the name of Solomon's ancestor.<sup>3</sup> They were of gigantic thickness, being each twelve cubits (18 feet in circumference, and were of fluted bronze. The actual shafts were only eighteen cubits (27 feet) in height.<sup>4</sup> Their "capitals," which were five cubits (7½ feet) high, resembled an opening lotos-blossom, and round the calyx of each was a net-work, to which was attached a double wreath of bronze pomegranates to the number of two hundred. On the top of the chapter was a beam or abacus ornamented with lily-

<sup>1</sup> That it was overlaid externally with thin plinths of gold and silver might seem incredible, yet according to Polybius (x. 27, § 10) this was actually the case with the roof of the palace at Ecbatana, and according to Herodotus (i. 98), with two rows of the external battlements of the city-walls.

<sup>2</sup> Duncker, ii. 278. From the amount of cedar wood employed in the construction the Temple is called "Lebanon" (Zech. xi. 1).

<sup>3</sup> "After some favourite persons of the time, perhaps young sons of Solomon" (Ewald, iii. 237). He illustrates the conjecture by the names of Phasaël and Māriane which Herod gave to his two towers at Jerusalem. The LXX., in 2 Chron. iii. 17, call them *Κατόρθωσις* and *Ἰσχύς*, "correction" and "strength." The words cannot mean, "He will establish," and "In strength," as Reville suggests.

<sup>4</sup> In 2 Chron. iii. 15 and Jer. lii. 21 (LXX.) the height is said to have been thirty-five cubits, but this is perhaps an error for thirty-six, the height of the *two together*,



work.<sup>1</sup> Yet, strange to say, it is a matter of dispute whether these two pillars stood detached before the Porch, or were mere ornaments within it, or formed part of its absolute support, or, as is now believed by many, belonged to a detached gate (*toran*) in front of the Porch itself.<sup>2</sup> They were broken up and carried away four centuries afterwards by the king of Babylon.<sup>3</sup>

The Porch was probably hung inside with gilded shields, David's spoils of war, won from the splendidly equipped soldiers

<sup>1</sup> Pomegranates typified good works. "Giotto placed a pomegranate fruit in the hand of Dante, and Raffaele crowned his Dante with blossoms of the same." "Lilies" were a new ornament, and peculiar to this epoch (only mentioned in Canticles and in Hosh. xiv. 5).

<sup>2</sup> The use and position of these pillars depends a good deal on the rendering of the word פְּתִיחַ, translated "*chapter*" in our Authorized Version, but *epithema* in the Septuagint. Some have taken it to mean "an entablature." Taking advantage of this hint, Fergusson, in his latest designs, supposed that the pillars were neither detached like obelisks, and with exaggerated capitals, but that they supported a screen or gateway, "like the vine-bearing screen described by Josephus and the Talmud as existing in front of the Temple of Herod." His design for this supposed gateway is "based on the Japanese and Indian *toran* like those forming gateways to the Great Tope at Sanchi. His conception may be roughly indicated thus. It will be seen that this harmonizes with the statement in 1 Kings vii. 16, for thus there is a double "*chapter*" or *epithema* of network ornamented with pomegranates, each epithema being five cubits high, and one (a *melathron*) of lily-work six cubits high; and thus also we get the total height of thirty-five cubits in 2 Chron. iii. 15.

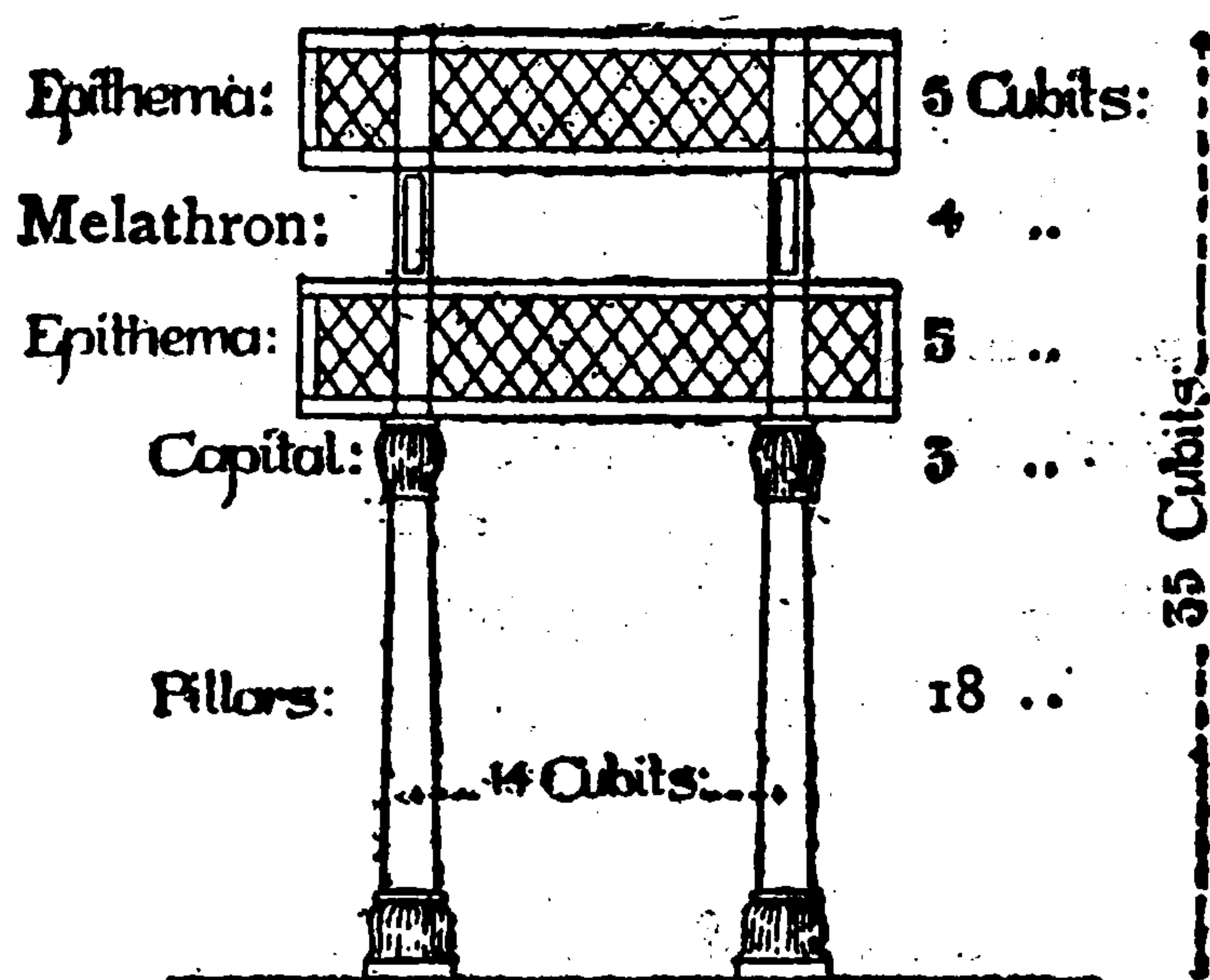


Diagram explanatory of Screen supported by the Pillars of Jachin and Boaz in front of Solomon's Temple;

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings xxiv. 13; Jer. lii. 21, 22.



of Hadarezer ; perhaps also with other specimens of armour like the sword of Goliath. It was ornamented apparently with the sort of conventional circular carving which is described as lily-work, and was exceedingly common in Persian buildings.

Passing through this porch, the Priests came to the large two-leaved door of the Holy Place, made in four squares.<sup>1</sup> It was a door of cypress wood<sup>2</sup> overlaid with gold of Parvaim,<sup>3</sup> and it turned on golden hinges. The gold of ceiling and walls was carved with ornaments of flowers and pomegranates, and palm branches.<sup>4</sup> In the Holy Place stood the golden altar of incense, and the golden table on which was placed the daily offering of shewbread, or "bread of the face," bread offered up in the presence of God. According to the statement of the Chronicler, instead of the one table of shewbread in the Tabernacle there were ten—five on the south and five on the north side.<sup>5</sup> What became of the old golden seven-branched candlestick we are not told. It must undoubtedly have been preserved, but Solomon seems to have supplied its place with ten candlesticks, five on each side the door of the Holiest.<sup>6</sup> Nothing that was in the Holiest Place was visible from the Sanctuary except the projecting ends of the golden staves which had been used to carry the Ark.<sup>7</sup>

The door of the Holiest Place, which was probably much smaller than that of the Holy Place, was made of wild-olive wood, and seems to have been in two leaves. The object of

<sup>1</sup> Such seems to be the meaning of the obscure clause in 1 Kings vi. 34. The advantage of the construction would be that only a *quarter* of the door need be opened at a time.

<sup>2</sup> Authorized Version, "fir-tree."

<sup>3</sup> Gold of *Parvaim* must mean the best gold, but is variously explained and occurs here only. It has been derived (1) from Sepharvaim (Knobel) ; (2) from Sanskrit *paru*, "hill" (Hitzig) ; (3) from Sanskrit *pūrva*, "eastern," (Wilford) ; (4) from Taprobane (Bochart).

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 5, where "chains" = festoons, and "cieled" should be "inlaid."

<sup>5</sup> 2 Chron. iv. 8. But the Book of Kings only mentions *one* table of shewbread (1 Kings vii. 48), and 2 Chron. xiii. 11, xxix. 18, speak of *one* candlestick and *one* table for shewbread in common use.

<sup>6</sup> Josephus, with his usual extravagance, says that Solomon made ten thousand candlesticks and ten thousand tables ; to say nothing of ten thousand priestly garments of fine linen with purple girdles, two hundred thousand trumpets and albs for the Levites, &c.

<sup>7</sup> It is not clear how these were *visible*, as there was a *curtain* (2 Chron. iii. 14). Perhaps they bulged out this curtain or was the curtain *inside* ?



the leaves was to open only a small part of the door if necessary. What is meant by "the lintel *and* sideposts *were* a fifth part of the wall" is very uncertain. The Vulgate renders it "the portal having posts of five angles," but neither does this throw much light on the subject. Perhaps it is meant that as the cedar partition was twenty cubits broad, and twenty cubits high, so the framework of the door was four cubits high and broad; whereas the door of the *Holy Place* was a *fourth* part of the wall, namely five cubits broad and high. The wooden leaves of this smaller door, like those of the Holy Place, were carved with cherubim, palm-trees, and open flowers, and overlaid with gold. This door of the Oracle—or at least one leaf of it—was always open, but the interior was concealed from view by a veil of blue, purple, and crimson,<sup>1</sup> woven with cherubim, before which hung festoons of golden chains. The partition in which the door stood was of cedar wood. The floors of the entire house were of cypress wood, overlaid with gold.

The question naturally arises whether the entire structure was supported by interior pillars or not? They are not mentioned, but it seems almost certain that they must have existed in order to give stability to the cedar beams. If so, there were probably four on each side in the Holy Place, and two on each side in the Oracle. The tables in the Holy Place would then stand in the interspaces of the pillars.

The Holiest Place was plunged in unbroken and perpetual gloom. It contained nothing but the Ark, and one or two other precious memorials of the Mosaic age.<sup>2</sup> Such was the sanctity of this most venerable relic and of the stone tablets of the Mosaic Law which it contained, that it was transferred into the Temple of Solomon unaltered, and placed upon the now sacred rock on which had stood the threshing floor of Araunah,<sup>3</sup> and which was identified by uncertain Jewish tradition with the rock on which Abraham had purposed to offer his son Isaac.<sup>4</sup> But though the

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned only in 2 Chron. iii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing is however said of the pot of manna, the rod of Aaron, and the Book of the Law.

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Chron. xxii. 1. In the LXX. addition to the narrative of 2 Sam. xxiv. 25 we find "Solomon afterwards enlarged this altar of David, for at first it was but small." (See 2 Chron. iii. 1.) "Moriah" means "appearance of Jehovah."

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." i. 13, § 1; vii. 13 § 4. Targum of Onkelos on Gen. xxii.



Ark and its original *capporeth* or "propitiatory" was left unchanged, Solomon overshadowed it with a new and magnificent covering. This consisted of two cherubim ten cubits high, their outstretched wings, of which each was five cubits long, extended to the wall on either side, and touched each other over the centre of the Ark.<sup>1</sup> These cherubim, which were doubtless analogous in conception to the winged figures so prevalent in Egypt and Assyria, represented the highest forms of created intelligence. Those on the "mercy-seat" were represented as gazing down upon the Tables of the Moral Law as the direct revelation of Jehovah's will. In the Tabernacle these cherubic figures *faced each other*;<sup>2</sup> in the Temple they looked outward towards the Holy Place.<sup>3</sup> We do not know whether they were in the shape of winged angels or of winged calves. That they were not like the "fourfold visaged four" of Ezekiel may be regarded as certain, but each of the four cherubic emblems was regarded as forming a perfect cherub, and as symbolizing the highest forms of created life, as being themselves an aspect of the revelation of the Divine, and especially in proportion as they remain in union with the moral law of God.

It is needless to add that the service of the Temple required a countless number of golden, silvern, and brazen vessels, which were made under the superintendence of the Tyrian artist. Even the commonest utensils for the service of the Sanctuary and the Oracle—the censers, the bowls, the plates, and even the instruments to trim the lamps—were of pure gold.

The whole structure was completed in sacred silence. The awful sanctity of the shrine would have been violated if its erection had been accompanied by the harsh and violent noises which would accompany the ordinary toil of masons. Every stone and beam therefore had been carefully prepared beforehand, and was merely carried to its place; "So that neither was

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Chron. iii. 10, they are called "cherubim of *image* work" (marg., *moveable*). The odd word ד'עצ is probably a clerical error for ד'עץ, "wooden." Josephus is probably insincere, when he says, "No man can tell, or even conjecture, of what shape the cherubim were." Pagan slanders about the Jews worshipping an ass, &c., made him chary of the admission of animal symbols. On this subject see my article in Kitto's "Cyclopædia," and Canon Cheyne's "Isaiah," vol. i. p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxxvii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 13, "Their faces were *inward*, i.e., towards the Holy Place."



hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building.”<sup>1</sup>

The workmanship must have been good, for we only read of necessary repairs first in the reign of Joash, about B.C. 856, a century and a half after the Temple had been dedicated, and once again two centuries later, in the days of King Josiah. It had stood upwards of four centuries, when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

The erection occupied seven years and a half,<sup>2</sup> in spite of the small size of the actual Temple. Size indeed was no element of its magnificence, for it was much smaller than many an English church. But it must be remembered that it was not intended either for priests or worshippers. Ancient and Eastern worship was mainly in the open air; the shrine itself only symbolized the residence of God. Even when we allow for immense preparations, the time devoted to the building is comparatively insignificant. The temple of the Ephesian Artemis took two hundred years to build, and four hundred to embellish. One pyramid required the toil of three hundred and sixty thousand men for twenty years.<sup>3</sup> Westminster Abbey did not assume its present size and aspect for many centuries. But no building in the world has ever been more widely famous than the Temple of Solomon. The name of the Jewish capital had no connection either with the Temple or with Solomon, but it was so identified with the king and the city in the imagination of mankind that the word Jerusalem was significantly perverted into Hierosolyma, as though it were of Greek derivation, and meant “the Temple of the Solymi.”

Israel had now an earthly king, but the tribes had not forgotten that their ideal was still a theocratic government; that, in the highest sense of all, the Lord God was their King, and that in that House and in Jerusalem He had put His name for ever. The Temple was thenceforth the centre of all their national life, and that centre was no idol shrine, no material image, but the symbolic palace of Him whom heaven, and the

<sup>1</sup> Probably in consequence of the prohibition of iron tools in erecting the altar (Exod. xx. 25).

“No workman’s axe, no ponderous hammer rung,  
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.”

<sup>2</sup> From the fourth to the eleventh year of Solomon’s reign.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, “Hist Nat.” xxxvi. 12.



heaven of heavens, could not contain. The Tabernacle of God was with men. He would dwell with them and walk with them, but still they should see nothing material : no manner of similitude should confuse their conception of a God who was a Spirit. This was the one fact which struck the heathen with most amazement. When the profane foot of Pompey intruded into the Holiest he was lost in astonishment to find nothing there — *vacuam sedem et inania arcana*.<sup>1</sup> In consequence of this the general view of the Greeks and Romans about the Jews was that, as they had no visible object of worship, they worshipped the clouds—" Nil praeter nubes et coeli numen adorant."

For it must be remembered that the actual Temple was not in those days primarily intended to be a House of Prayer. Its golden chambers were not trodden by the feet of a single worshipper except the Priests and Levites, and none but the High Priest ever entered into the darkness of the Holiest Place, and that but once in the whole year. The Temple was the visible House of God, the place where His honour dwelt, a House for Him rather than for His congregation. And the *main* public worship of the Temple precincts consisted of chanting and sacrifice, although we read also of prayers being offered both publicly and privately in the great open court.

It is probable that the taste of a modern worshipper would have been shocked beyond measure by the appearance and smell of the Temple Court. On many occasions it must have been converted—there is no other expression—into a ghastly *abattoir*, which but for immense care in purification would soon have been prolific of pestilence.<sup>2</sup> In that comparatively confined area cattle, large and small, were constantly being slain to the number of many thousands. The floors must literally have swum with blood, and under the blaze of Eastern sunlight, the burning of fat and flesh on the large blazing altar must have been carried on amid heaps of sacrificial foulness—offal and skins and thick smoke and steaming putrescence—which must, beyond all human possibility of prevention, have given to the Outer Court the semblance of huge shambles. No doubt the system of rocky subterranean drainage was colossal, and it is

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, "Hist." v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> The Talmud invents two miracles—that "the carcasses never became putrid, and no fly was ever to be seen in the slaughter-houses" (Yoma, f. 21. 1).



probable that there was once a perennial spring on the Temple Mount.<sup>1</sup> All that an army of Priests and Levites could do to keep the place clean and tolerable was done. The molten sea, the wheeled caldrons of water, the supplies stored up in rocky cisterns, and brought from the Pools of Solomon at Etam, were doubtless in incessant requisition ; but as the driven and doomed animals were constantly congregated and slaughtered in the actual precincts, no power short of a stupendous and unrecorded miracle could have kept pure and clean and sweet, to our modern conceptions, the crowded scene of sacrifice where, morning and evening, droves of oxen were assembled, and sometimes even in hecatombs the victims bled. We must not, however, forget either that these sacrifices were full of awful significance to the worshippers, or that the sacrificial ceremonies were accompanied by private devotions, and by the thrilling music of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

The ceremony of the Dedication was by far the most magnificent that the nation had ever seen.<sup>2</sup> So immense were the preparations which it required that, as has sometimes been the case with modern coronations, it was postponed for nearly a year after the completion of the building. It was thus made nearly coincident with the autumn Feast of Tabernacles, so that the two feasts in succession occupied fourteen days.<sup>3</sup>

The old Tabernacle—contrasting strangely in its rough simplicity with the gorgeous costliness of the new Temple, and a striking proof of the vast advance made by the fortunes of the people—was brought by a solemn procession of Priests and Levites from the High Place at Gibeon, which was henceforth

<sup>1</sup> See Tacitus, "Hist." v. 12, "*fons perennis aquæ*"; and comp. Ps. xlv. 4, lxxxvii. 7; Zech. xiv. 18; Ezek. xlvii. 1-12. The water supply of Jerusalem has been grievously diminished by denudation and the cutting down of trees.

<sup>2</sup> From 1 Kings vi. 38, ix. 1, we should infer that Solomon delayed the dedication *thirteen years*, till all his buildings were finished. It seems better to suppose that this is merely due to the arrangement of the documents; for from 2 Chron. v.-vii., we should certainly draw the more natural conclusion that the Temple was dedicated as soon as it was finished.

<sup>3</sup> The Temple was finished in the eighth month of the eleventh year (1 Kings vi. 38); it was dedicated in the seventh month (Tisri or Ethanim) of the twelfth year.



to be abandoned.<sup>1</sup> With it they brought all that yet remained of its ancient vessels and furniture, especially the golden altar of incense and the golden table of shewbread.<sup>2</sup> This removal was doubtless inaugurated with sacrifices. But far more splendid was the procession of Priests, Princes, and chief representatives of the tribes which brought the Ark from the temporary sanctuary in which it had been placed on Mount Zion forty years before. It was in the month Ethanim,<sup>3</sup> and was doubtless a repetition on a more imposing scale of the triumphal march, accompanied by songs and dances, with which David had accompanied the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom.

The Priests lifted the Ark out of its shrine, and replaced it in the Holiest; the Levites of the family of Kohath carried it from Gibeon to the Temple Mount. All the Elders, and Priests, and Levites, and people of Israel flocked to Jerusalem, from the borders of Hamath, on the north of Libanus, to the torrent of Egypt—the brook

“which parts  
Egypt from Syrian ground.”

No true Israelite, however distant his home, would like to be absent from the celebration of an event of such unique importance in the history of his nation.

The king himself accompanied the procession in all his royal state, and again the road swam with the blood of sacrifices, too many to be counted. The great Outer Court was thronged with myriads of worshippers who were not allowed to proceed further. The Ark passed into the darkness of the Oracle, and was seen no more till it was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar four centuries afterwards, except so far as it was dimly visible under its blood-besprinkled mercy-seat to the eyes of the High Priest by the light of his burning censer on the Day of Atonement.

So mysterious was the emblem, that the historians record it

<sup>1</sup> It was probably stowed away in one of the chambers (1 Chron. xxiii. 32). It was supposed to be still in existence in the days of Jeremiah (see 2 Macc. ii. 4). The Rabbis say that it was put in a room at the *top* of the Holiest.

<sup>2</sup> Eupolemus *ap.* Eusebius, “Præp. Ev.” ix. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Ethanim (called Tisri after the Exile) was part September and October. The name, perhaps, means (LXX., Ἀθανίμ) the “month of gifts,” *i.e.*, vintage offerings (Thenius).



as noticeable that the staves by which it was carried were now drawn out in sign of rest. This had been previously forbidden.<sup>1</sup> The ends of these long staves were only visible when a spectator stood in the Holy Place, opposite to the door of the Holiest, but even then could not be seen by any one who stood in the Porch or Court.<sup>2</sup>

When the Ark was deposited on its rocky support,<sup>3</sup> under the protecting wings of the golden cherubim, the king, who completely absorbed the leading functions on this occasion, took his seat in the presence of his congregated people on a brazen scaffold three cubits high, five broad, and five long, which had been erected for him in the midst of the Court of the Priests, in front of the altar. From this point he was visible to the whole congregation assembled in the Outer Court, for he was only separated from them by a low partition wall, and he stood on higher ground. The steps of the huge altar itself were occupied by dense groups of Priests and Levites, and musicians, robed in white, and holding in their hands the glittering harps and cymbals, and the psalteries in their red frames of precious wood.<sup>4</sup> A hundred and twenty trumpeters, all Priests, rent the air with the sudden blast of their silver trumpets, as the king took his seat, clad in his gorgeous robes and conspicuous in manly beauty. Then the mighty song of praise swelled from innumerable voices. The moment was one of awful solemnity, in which the feelings of the Priests and of the whole congregation were wrought to the highest pitch, and amid the blaze of sudden glory—the Shekinah or glory-cloud, which was to them a token of God's immediate approval—even the anointed ministers of the house were overpowered with awe, and so much dazzled as scarcely to be able to perform their ministry.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxv. 13-15. Nothing is said of the sacred objects mentioned in Heb. ix. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. v. 9, where the words, "were seen from the Ark," are almost certainly a corruption for "from the Holy Place" (1 Kings viii. 8).

<sup>3</sup> Just as the Greeks regarded the Temple of Delphi as the navel (*omphalos*) of the world, so the Jews regarded the Temple of Jerusalem as the centre point of the universe, for which they quoted Ezek. v. 5 (Yoma, 53, 54).

<sup>4</sup> The One Hundred and Thirty-sixth Psalm, or some psalm of the same structure, was chanted by alternate choirs of Levites, who, at the close of the ceremony, seem to have chanted in an unwonted attitude of prostration (2 Chron. vii. 3).



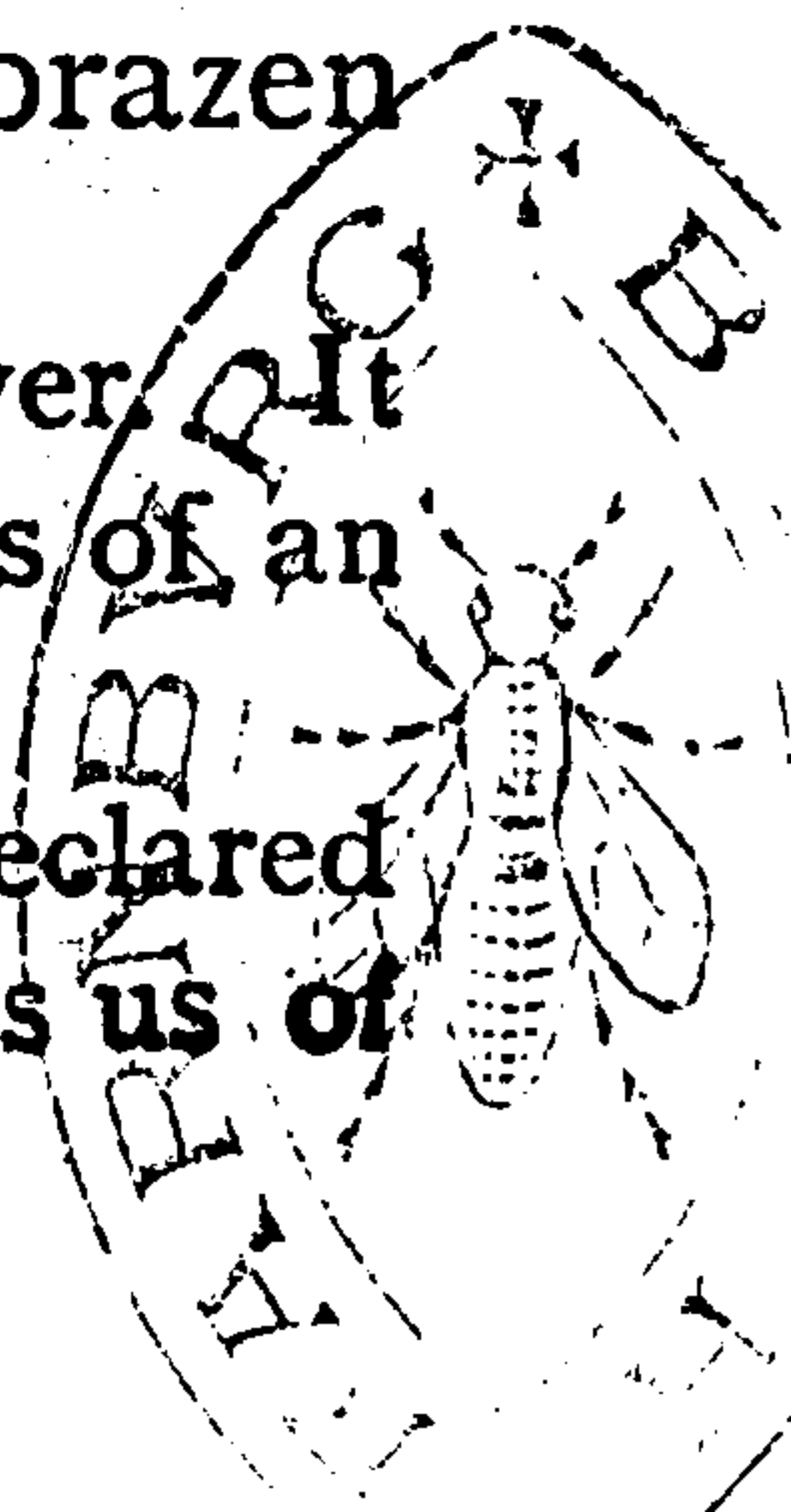
When the burst of music and psalmody was hushed, the heart of the king—deeply moved at that supreme moment of his life—broke into brief words of prophetic song. Turning his face to the standing multitudes he blessed them, and briefly spoke of the history and significance of the new House of God. Then in the presence of all the congregation he came forward to the altar of the Lord, and with his palms upturned to heaven, as though to receive its outpoured gifts—which was the usual attitude of Eastern prayer—he kneeled down. This is the first instance in Scripture in which this attitude of prayer is mentioned, and it was a sign of deep humiliation. To the latest days of Jewish history men as a rule stood up, instead of kneeling down, to pray.

The prayer was a long and passionate entreaty to God to show His favour to His Temple, and to hear the prayers and supplications of His people, both individually and collectively, and even of strangers, who in the agonies of sin, or defeat, or famine, or pestilence, or exile, should pray either in the courts of that house or turning their face towards it.<sup>1</sup> But the most remarkable feature of the prayer is its extreme spirituality. Rising far above the spirit of his age, the builder of the Temple feels, and expresses the thought of St. Paul, that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with man's hands as though He needed anything, seeing that "the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less the house that I have built." The king then rose from his knees, and once more blessed the congregation with a loud voice, ending with an exhortation to the people to be faithful to God's commandments.

Then began the stupendous thankoffering of 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep. Doubtless neither king nor people had yet fully realized that these were not in themselves pleasing to God, but that to Him the righteousness of a sincere heart is dearer than thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil. We find it hard to realize the possibility of so immense a slaughter, but it may be paralleled even by modern instances.<sup>2</sup> The brazen

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edersheim ingeniously compares it with the Lord's Prayer. It resembles in many respects the Book of Deuteronomy, and consists of an introduction, seven petitions, and a solemn conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Julian's holocausts were so enormous that men sneeringly declared that the race of men was threatened with extinction. Josephus tells us of





altar however, huge as it was, was wholly inadequate to such unprecedented masses of offerings, and, for this occasion, Solomon consecrated the whole Court. The Chronicler adds to the older narrative that during this tremendous ceremony a fire descended miraculously from heaven and consumed the offerings, and that when the vast multitude saw the falling flame, and the glory-cloud of God's visible Presence, they prostrated themselves upon the earth, while once more the trumpets pealed forth, and the Levites raised the choral chant, "Praise the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever!" The sacrifice was followed by a feast of the collected myriads of worshippers, which lasted for a week, and was succeeded by the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>1</sup> When the whole ceremony of inauguration was finished—the day of which David had dreamed and sung far off<sup>2</sup>—the king dismissed the people, who in their turn blessed him and went to their homes with hearts full of joy and gratitude for all that God had done for their nation and for the house of David. There was no more magnificent solemnity than this in the whole history of the Jews, and the memory and the consequences of it continued to the latest days. And so unique was the position of Solomon towards the house—so fully was the half-sacerdotal character of his sovereignty recognized—that he not only offered sacrifices in person three times every year upon the brazen altar, but was even permitted—if we rightly understand an obscure text in the Book of Kings 3—to

the 256,500 paschal lambs offered in Jerusalem in one year ("B. J." vi. 9, § 3). Dean Stanley refers to Burton's "Pilgrimage," i. 318, where we are told that the Khalif Moktader, at Mecca, sacrificed 40,000 camels, and 50,000 sheep. It must be remembered that, except in the case of whole burnt-offerings, the greater part of the animal was eaten when the fat parts had been burnt on the altar.

<sup>1</sup> This is the probable meaning of 1 Kings viii. 65, 66, where, however, the words, "and seven days, even fourteen days," which do not accord with, "On the eighth day," are not in the LXX., and are probably interpolated from 2 Chron. vii. 9. Nothing whatever is said of the Day of Atonement, which does not seem to have been observed. There are other difficulties, for the eighth day of the Feast should be the twenty-second of the month (Lev. xxiii. 39), but in 2 Chron. vii. 10 it is called the twenty-third.

<sup>2</sup> See Ps. cxxxii.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings ix. 25. This and other texts are no doubt susceptible of the interpretation that "qui facit per alium facit per se;" but certainly the *impression* left by the repetition of such notices is that Solomon performed these priestly offices in person.



enter into the Holy Place itself and burn incense upon the golden altar. If this was so, the concession was unique, and in later times the leprosy of King Uzziah was regarded as a direct punishment for his presumptuous usurpation of an office which belonged properly to the Priests alone.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was this Cloud of Glory and descending flame the only token of Divine favour. When all was over Solomon once more saw a vision such as he had seen in Gibeon towards the beginning of his reign. God said to him in his dream that He had accepted his prayer, and, on the one condition of faithfulness, would establish the kingdom in his house, and continue to bless his people.

If we would estimate the mingled enthusiasm and love inspired in the hearts of faithful Israelites by the Temple and its services, we have only to read such a Psalm as the Eighty-fourth.

“How amiable are Thy tabernacles, Thou Lord of hosts !  
My soul longeth, yea fainteth, for the courts of the Lord.

\* \* \* \* \*

Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house :  
They will still be praising Thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

or Psalm cxxii.—

“I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the Lord.

\* \* \* \* \*

For my brethren and companions' sake  
I would now say, Peace be with thee.  
For the sake of the house of the Lord our God  
I will seek thy good.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It was the belief of the Jews that the Second Temple differed from the first in the presence of five things—the Ark ; the Sacred Fire ; the *Shekinah* ; the Holy Spirit (*i.e.*, the possession by the High Priest of the gift of prophecy) ; and the Urim and 'Thummim (Yoma, f. 21. 2). This, however, is only an inference by *Gematria*, from the omission of the final *h* (ה) in the verb, “I will be glorified” (וְאֶנְכָּר) in Hag. i. 8 ; since the letter (ה) = 5. The Talmudic hyperboles about the Temple are amazing, *e.g.*, that the noise of its opening gates was heard ten miles off, and that the goats of Jericho smelt its incense (Yoma, f. 39, 2).

<sup>2</sup> Similar feelings are expressed in Psalms xxiv., xxvi., xlii., lxxii., and others.



The affection of the nation for this sacred building and its successors never ceased. They called it the "House of the Sanctuary," the "House of Ages."<sup>1</sup> In the Talmud we find the enigma, "Let the Beloved, the son of the Beloved, come and let him build the Beloved to the Beloved on the land of the Beloved, by which the Beloved may be atoned for":—which means, "Let Solomon (2 Sam. xii. 25), the son of Abraham (Jer. xi. 15), build the Temple (Ps. lxxxiv. 1) to God (Isa. v. 1) in Benjamin (Deut. xxxiii. 12) to atone for Israel (Jer. xii. 7).

The Temple was the last relic of their independent nationality for which they fought. When it rose in lurid light above their last struggle with the legions of Titus,

"As 'mid the cedar courts and gates of gold  
The trampled ranks in miry carnage rolled,  
To save their Temple every hand essayed,  
And with cold fingers grasped the feeble blade ;  
Through their torn veins reviving fury ran,  
And life's last anger warmed the dying man."

To this day a Jew entering Jerusalem for the first time rends his garments and cries, "Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire."<sup>2</sup>

"Since the destruction of the Temple," said Rabbi Simon Ben Gamaliel, "a day has not passed without a curse, the dew does not come down with a blessing, and the fruits have not their savour."<sup>3</sup>

The completion of the Temple was the natural occasion for carrying out in practice that reorganization of the entire ministries of service which, as we read in the Book of Chronicles, David had devised, and which was rendered absolutely essential by the great multitude of the Priests and Levites.

The Levites, divided into the three main families of Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites, were no less than 38,000 in number. They now acquired a new importance and a large increase of duties. They were divided as follows—the general care of the Temple service was entrusted to 24,000; 6,000 were officers and judges; 4,000 were porters; 4,000 were musicians.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 15, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Moed Qaton, f. 26. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Sotah, f. 48. 1; Berakhoth, f. 59. 1 (Hershon, "Talmud. Miscell." p. 230, &c.)



How elaborate was the musical service may be judged from the fact that besides the singers there was a band of no less than 288 with their leaders, all skilled in playing musical instruments: the 3,700 singers were also divided into 24 courses.<sup>1</sup> Probably the antiphonal service of the sanctuary was of a character as stately and imposing as was at all possible to the resources of the age, and the music, simple as it must have been, had a charm for the multitude who assembled in the Temple Courts and deepened their affection for their holy and beautiful House of God.

The two families of Priests were divided into twenty-four courses, numbering one thousand seven hundred and sixty, and were required to provide for the due maintenance of the services week by week. Besides these there were numerous Nethinim—temple-serfs, descendants of the ancient Gibeonites—who were employed in the more menial offices as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The whole worship of the nation was thus concentrated round one building which was meant to symbolize the actual residence and presence of Jehovah in the midst of His people. This was the reason why no treasures of gold or precious stones were deemed too costly, no skill of art too elaborate to be lavished on a sanctuary where God was believed to dwell between the outstretched wings of the cherub-chariot.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The details are given in 1 Chron. xxiii.—xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is used of the two cherubim of Solomon even in 1 Chron. xxviii. 18. The Temple is called the "Palace" of Jehovah in xxix. 1, 19, though there only. The word is a Persian word (*bîrah*), elsewhere only found in Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE PLAN AND ASPECT OF THE TEMPLE.

Ideal reconstructions—Few remains—Scantiness of trustworthy information—Fancies of Josephus—Recent excavations—The Talmud—Size of the platform—Theories as to the style—1. Professor Wilkins and the Greek theory ; now abandoned—2. Canina and the Egyptian theory—3. Fergusson, Robins, and others believe that the architecture was Asiatic and Phœnician ; reasons for this view—Analogous buildings—The Temple as restored on the Phœnician theory.

THE authorities on which we have to depend for the reconstruction of Solomon's Temple are purely verbal. We do not possess even the slightest pictured outline, and the sole remains of it, if there be any, are only in the massive substructions of the vast platform on which it rested. Practically the Book of Kings is our only real authority. The authors of the Book of Chronicles furnish but few elucidatory details. Josephus idealizes and exaggerates, doubles, and sometimes even quadruples, the authentic proportions. He is also misled by attributing to Solomon the architectural features which belonged only to the Temple of Herod with which he was familiar. The "great and broad cloisters," the "high gates overlaid with gold, and fronting each of the four winds," and other details, are, as far as Solomon is concerned, the mere product of the Jewish historian's imagination. A single fact may suffice to convict him of extravagant hyperbole. He says that Solomon filled up great valleys into which a man could not look without his head swimming, and that the ground was elevated four hundred cubits (600 feet). The recent excavations of Captain Warren and others have shown that "the lowest stone of the oldest wall of the



present Temple area stands on the rock itself, and the summit of Mount Moriah is but 163 feet above the rock on which the lowest stone rests. That is to say, Josephus has *quadrupled* the height in his glowing description.<sup>1</sup> . . . He rarely contradicts the Sacred Scriptures, but rather omits or supplements them, or else takes advantage of some verbal discrepancy or peculiar mode of expression to introduce his own notions, whenever it serves his purpose to do so, or tends to exalt the glory of his people Israel.”<sup>2</sup>

If Josephus can only be used with extreme caution as an authority for Solomon's Temple, the Talmud may be pronounced absolutely worthless for this purpose. It hardly even professes to preserve a single traditional detail of the smallest value. Indeed, the allusions of the Talmud have reference almost exclusively to Herod's Temple; and although this Third Temple, like that of Zerubbabel, five centuries earlier, was in its main conception a reproduction of that of Solomon, which was again five centuries before Zerubbabel's, yet it differed in size, in magnificence, and probably also in many external particulars. The ideal Temple of Ezekiel is modelled on that of Solomon, but throws no light on the points which are obscure. In reading the descriptions of Herod's Temple, we must remember Mr. Fergusson's warning, that it made up “a rich and varied pile worthy of the Roman love of architectural display, but in singular contrast with the modest aspirations of a purely Semitic people.”

Modern excavations, though they have produced many interesting results, have not as yet succeeded in finally solving such elementary problems as the size of the platform on which Solomon's Temple was built, or the part of the entire platform which the Temple occupied, or the position of his palace with reference to it. Even as to the space occupied by the Temple

<sup>1</sup> The only things which he diminishes are the Cherubim. He makes these only half their *real height*, but, to make up for it, says that they were of *solid gold*.

<sup>2</sup> I take these remarks from the interesting and valuable pamphlet of Mr. E. C. Robins, F.S.A., “A Review of the Various Theories respecting the Form, &c., of the Temple of Solomon” (Dryden Press, London, 1886). Mr. Robins has very kindly allowed me to avail myself of his researches in this Appendix, and to use the designs by which they were illustrated when he read his paper before the Society of Architects.



precincts, there are discrepancies of theory. Substructions traditionally known as "Solomon's Stables" occupy the south-east corner of the Haram area. Here, undoubtedly, are the most ancient remains, and it is an interesting fact that one of the lowest stones bears a Phœnician inscription. This, and other inscriptions, are in red paint, apparently put on by a brush,

for there are also a few splashes of red paint. They are believed to be quarry-marks, made before the stones were placed *in situ*. The larger letters are five inches high. The letters resemble O Y Q, and may be numerals. See "The Recovery of Jerusalem," by Captains Wilson and Warren (1871), p. 139, &c. The appended diagram will clearly illustrate the whole subject.

The re-constructive designs of modern architects and antiquaries, though they must of necessity bear some sort of resemblance to each other, are yet so widely unlike in details that they go upon entirely different assump-

SHAFT SUNK AT SOUTH-EAST ANGLE OF WALL.

tions, even as to the national style or architecture adopted.

1. According to Professor Wilkins, in his "Prolusiones Architectonicæ," the style was *European*, and distinctively *Greek*. He thinks, in fact, that it became the type of Greek architecture in subsequent ages,

"Ere first to Greece the builders' art was known,  
Or the light chisel brushed the Parian stone."

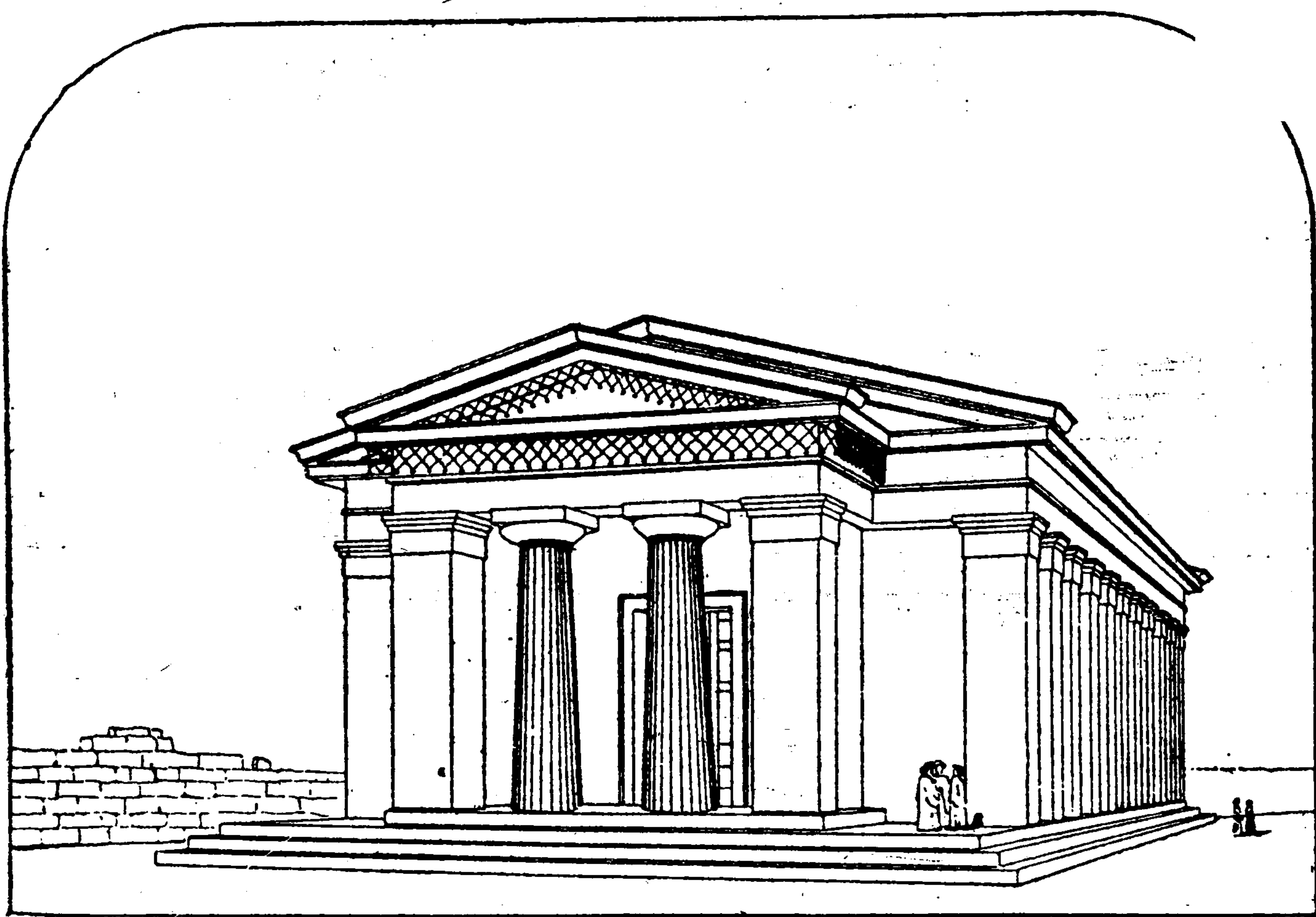
On the assumption that the Jewish cubit was 21·888 inches, he draws a plan of the Temple which is nearly the size of the Temple of Paestum. He has scarcely found a single follower



except Mr. Hakewill. It will be sufficient to give the design of Professor Wilkins.<sup>1</sup>

2. Far more reasonable and less arbitrary is the view of those inquirers who looked to *Egypt* for the type of Solomonic architecture.

This was the opinion adopted by Professor Hosking in the "Encyclopædia Britannica"; by Commodore Canina, of Rome, in his small folio on "Jewish Antiquities"; by Mr. Thrupp, in his book on "Ancient Jerusalem"; and by the Count de Vogüé, in his book on "Jerusalem and Its Temples." It is now deservedly abandoned as untenable. Eupolemus, indeed, in a



THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON, AFTER PROFESSOR WILKINS.

fragment preserved by Eusebius, says that Pharaoh sent to Solomon, with his daughter, eighty thousand workmen to help in building the Temple. But he calls the Pharaoh *Vaphres*, and the story is, on the face of it, entirely unhistorical.<sup>2</sup>

3. The belief that the style of architecture of Solomon's Temple was *Asiatic*, and specifically *Phœnician*, may now be regarded as established by the historic evidence of our documents, and by the skilled reasoning of Mr. Fergusson and

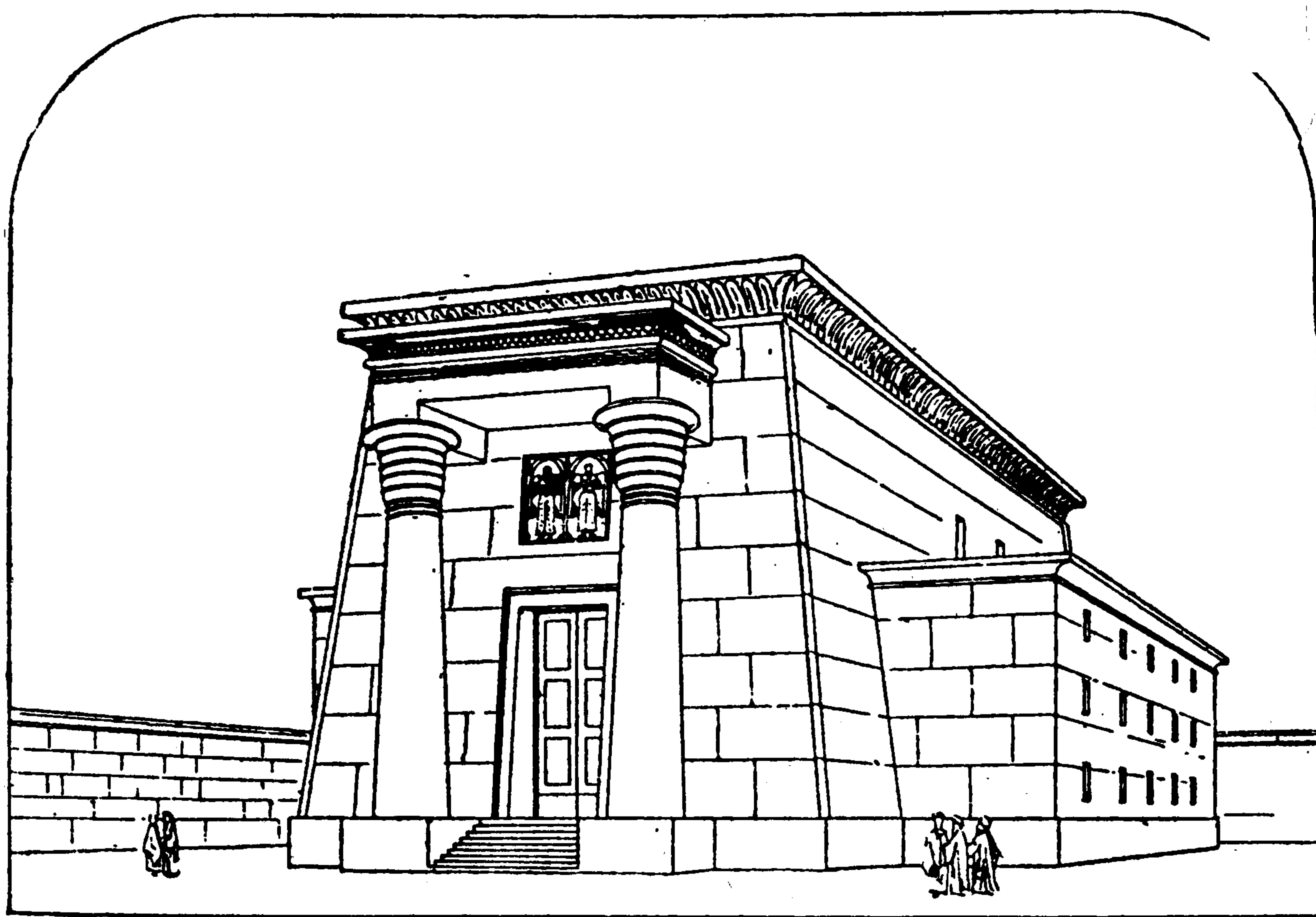
<sup>1</sup> For the use of these illustrations I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Robins.

<sup>2</sup> Eupolemus in Eusebius, "Præp. Ev." ii. 30-35.

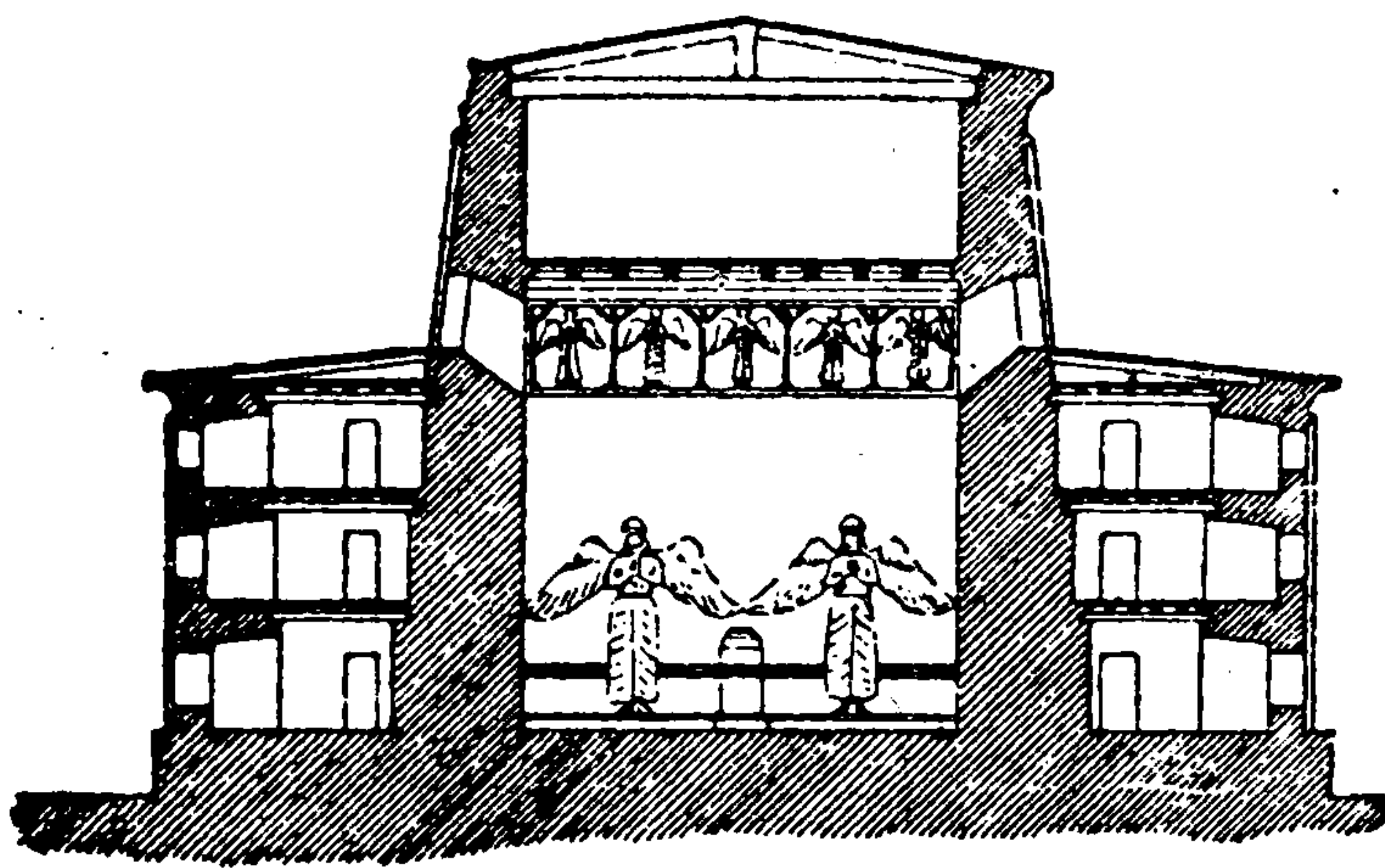


many other architects, among whom Mr. Robins must take a high place.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Robins follows the views of Mr. Fergusson, and points out that Solomon from first to last was indebted to the assistance of Phœnician workmen for every detail of art with which his temple



TEMPLE OF SOLOMON, AFTER CANINA.



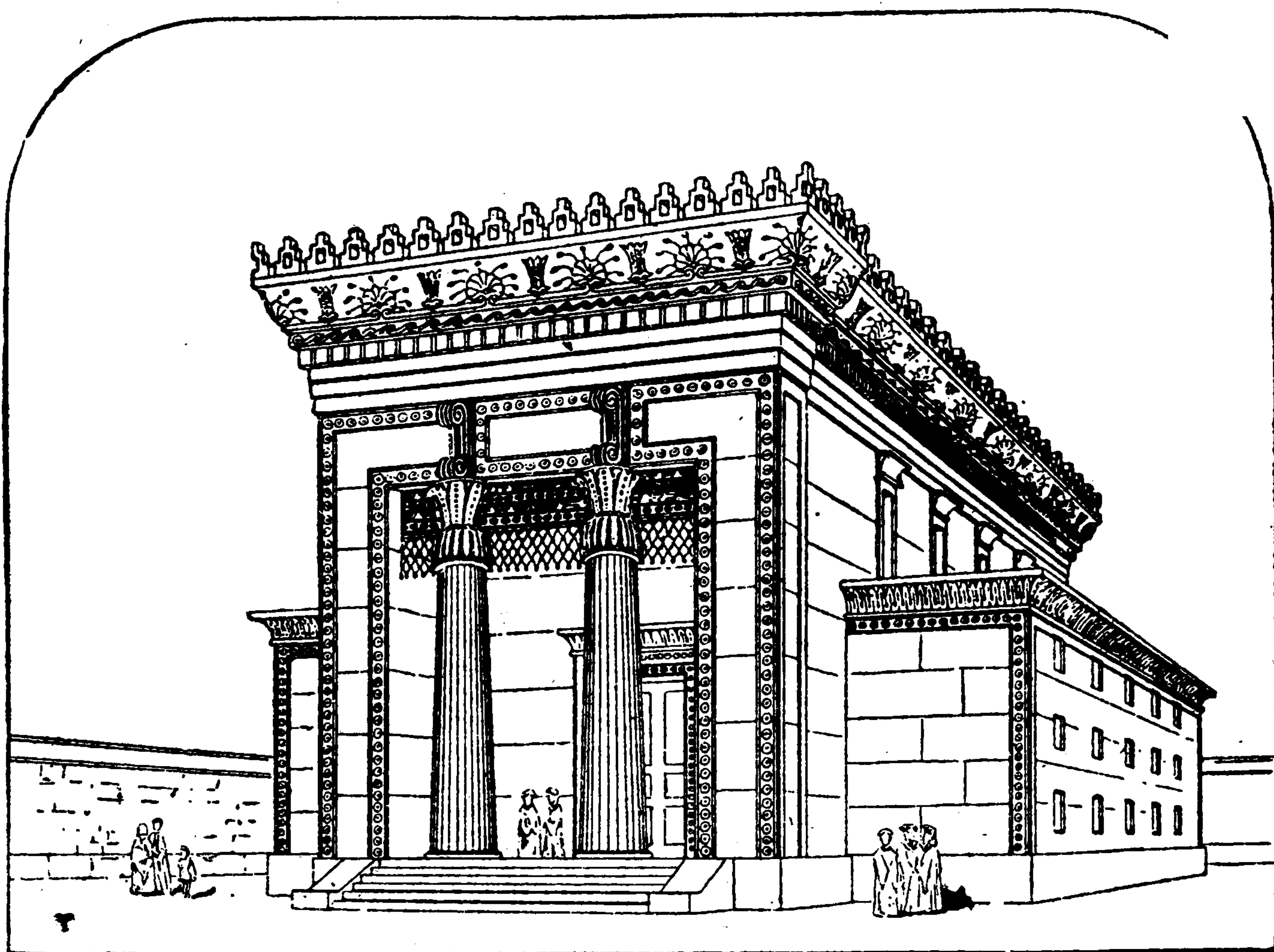
Section:

was enriched. There is no Egyptian feature of ornament in the Temple which is not also Phœnician, and the pomegranate

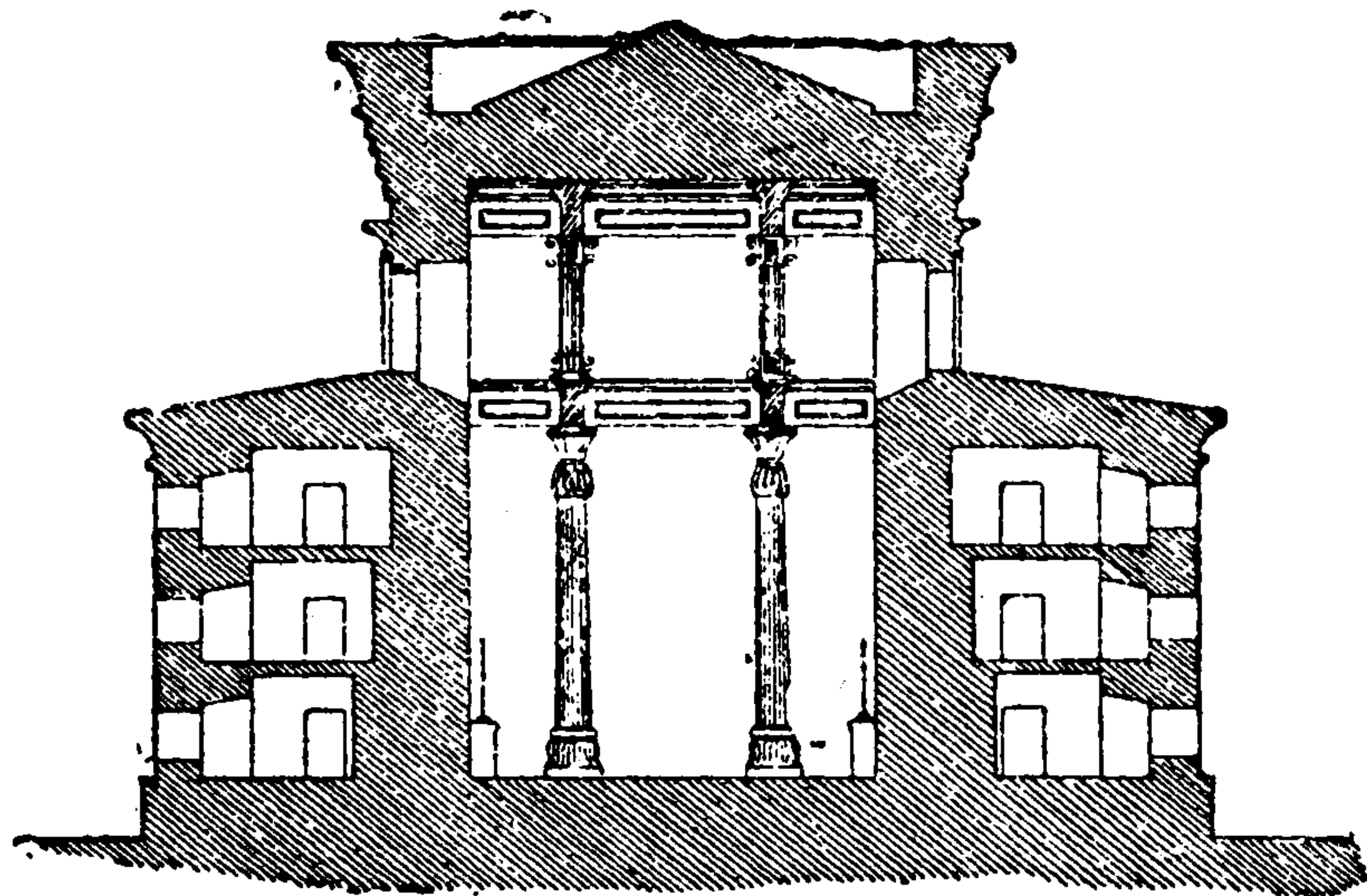
<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fergusson has dealt with the subject in "Principles of Beauty in Art," 1849; "The History of Ancient and Modern Architecture," 1865; "The Temples of the Jews," 1878; and articles on the Tabernacle and Temple in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," 1863. Mr. Lewin takes the same view, and also Messrs. Perrot and Chipiez, in the "Revue Générale de l'Architecture," Jan., 1886.



is not an Egyptian fruit. Phœnician art ultimately came from Assyria and Persia, and it is to those countries that we must look for illustrative details. The style of masonry at the south-eastern angle of the Haram area closely resemble that at Passargardæ. Architects consider that the Temple bore a more



TEMPLE OF SOLOMON BY E. C. ROBINS.



• Section:

general resemblance to that of Venus (=Astarte) at Paphos—an island colonized by Phœnicians—than to any other. There are, indeed, no remains of this temple worth speaking of, but representations of it are found on coins and gems.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kugler, "Gesch. d. Baukunst," 121.



The details of the design by Mr. Robins are entirely gleaned from examples at Nineveh and Persepolis—the doors and windows from Persepolitan palaces ; the upper and crowning members of the cornice from the tomb of Darius, and a pavilion in the sculptures at Khorsabad ; the lower cornice from the bas-relief of El-tell-Armarna, and from the stylobate of the temple at Khorsabad ; the enrichments for the pavement, and other details from ornamental pottery at Konyunjik ; the pillars from Persepolis, with adapted capitals and network.



## CHAPTER IX.

### SOLOMON'S OTHER BUILDINGS AND CITIES.

The passion for building—Solomon's palace, and its adjoining edifices—Obscurity of all details—The House of the Forest of Lebanon ; its shields—The Porch of pillars—The Hall of Judgment—The Palace—The staircase to the Temple—Water supply—Gardens—Summer retreats—Works of national usefulness—Fortification of the city—A chain of fortress towns—Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer—The Beth-Horons—Baalath — Store cities, and chariot-towns—Roads—Tadmor in the wilderness.

KINGS that have once indulged their passion for magnificence by the erection of great buildings are scarcely ever content with rearing a single edifice. Solomon's work as a builder was continued with more or less activity through the remainder of his reign.

First came the erection of a palace, which occupied thirteen years.<sup>1</sup> The old palace on Mount Zion was amply sufficient for a humble warrior-chieftain like David, but seemed altogether too insignificant for a grand Oriental potentate like Solomon. A king who now began to be so closely connected with the dynasts of Tyre and Egypt, was not content even with cedarn chambers.

The description of this palace, and of his other royal buildings in Jerusalem, is given so briefly in the Book of Kings, that we can form no real impression of its architecture. Strange to say, it is even a disputed point whether the palace, the House of the Forest of Lebanon, the pillared portico, the porch of the throne, and the palace of Pharaoh's daughter, were so many separate

<sup>1</sup> It was much larger than the Temple, and no preparations had been made.



buildings, or whether, as Josephus says, they were but portions and wings of the one royal palace. No commentator or archæologist, ancient or modern, has attempted any real or intelligible description of these works, for the sufficient reason that the details are far too brief and obscure. Of the ancients Josephus gives reins to his fancy, and talks of Corinthian pillars adorned with leaves and branches, of magnificent and refreshing groves, and many other marvellous facts ; while the commentator Villalpandus furnishes us with a ground-plan of which the details must be drawn from his inner consciousness. Others make the building so small that it would have been physically impossible for the king and his harem to find room in it.

It is almost certain that the description of 1 Kings vii. 1-13 is meant to apply to the various parts of one structure,<sup>1</sup> which served all the purposes of royalty, and was built on Ophel, the southern continuation of the Temple mount. The first part of this structure is called "The House of the Forest of Lebanon." Some have supposed that this refers to a summer villa built by Solomon at the foot of Mount Lebanon ;<sup>2</sup> but this notion is at once refuted by the fact that the chief and splendid ornament of this hall of cedars consisted of two hundred shields of beaten gold, and three hundred bucklers of the same precious material.<sup>3</sup> Each of the shields, which like the Greek *θυρεοί*, the Latin *scuta*, were large enough to cover the whole body, required an outlay of six hundred shekels of gold (about £1,200) ; and each of the bucklers (*ἀσπίδες*, *clypei*) required three *manehs* of gold (about £300) for its gilding.<sup>4</sup> These golden shields were all carried away by Shishak, king of Egypt, in the following reign, and assuredly he did not go to Lebanon to fetch them. The royal hall in Jerusalem was called by admiring fancy "the House of the Forest of Lebanon," because its pillars resembled a forest of cedar wood. It was a house one hundred cubits long, fifty broad, and thirty high. Four (or according to the Septuagint, *three*) rows of cedar pillars, of which three rows stood over one another, fifteen in a row, supported a

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings vii. 2 should be rendered "For he built," not "he built *also*."

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Kings ix. 19 ; 2 Chron. viii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> For the ornamenting of buildings with shields see 2 Sam. viii. 7 ; 1 Kings x. 17 ; Cant. iv. 4 ; Ezek. xxvii. 11 ; 1 Macc. iv. 57, vi. 2.

<sup>4</sup> According to 2 Chron. ix. 16, a *maneh* of gold is one hundred shekels. It is usually taken to be of the value of 2½ lbs. of gold. Rehoboam replaced them by brazen ones.



building of three storeys. If there were only forty-five pillars, and yet four rows of fifteen, we can only suppose that one row of pillars was built into the side-wall.<sup>1</sup> Each storey had but a single chamber, of which the lattices were opposite to each other, and the beams as well as the pillars were of cedar wood. The chambers, perhaps, constituted the royal treasury.<sup>2</sup> But is it not a somewhat idle attempt to attempt to restore a building out of unscientific descriptions and an uncertain text?<sup>3</sup>

In front of this building was erected another porch—which being a colonnade only was called the Porch of Pillars—fifty cubits long and thirty wide, of which we are not told the specific use.

And in front of this, perhaps separated from it by a court, rose the proper porch of the palace, which served as the Throne-room, or Hall of Judgment. It was entirely wainscotted with cedar wood, and was “the King’s Gate,” where he administered justice to his people. In this hall stood the regal throne, which was the wonder of the age.

Abutting on these buildings, but separated from them by a court, of which the walls were built of large hewn masses of stone, was the actual palace, also built of polished marble, and overlaid within with beams of cedar wood like the walls of the Temple. Behind this stood the harem, of which the finest

<sup>1</sup> So Jōsephus, “Antiq.” vii. 5, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> As it seems impossible to form any very definite conception of the building from the scanty data, I simply append the note of Reuss, “Voici l’idée que nous nous faisons de cette construction. Trois étages de pièces reposaient sur une colonnade, laquelle en formait le rez-de-chaussée; cette colonnade ainsi que les planchers intermédiaires, était en bois de cèdre. Les quarante-cinq pièces étaient disposées de manière qu’elles avaient vue sur une cour intérieure, et elles recevaient le jour non par des fenêtres (“hallôn,” vi. 4), qui, en Orient, sont généralement petites, mais par de larges ouvertures, qui prenaient peut-être tout l’espace entre les cloisons qui séparaient une pièce de l’autre; de sorte que le tout formait trois galeries superposées.” The text, he adds, tells us nothing of the number of the columns, the size of the court, the extent of the rooms, the external appearance, the necessary staircases, the height of the storeys, the number of the rooms, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Fergusson (s.v. Palace, in the “Dictionary of the Bible”) says that all the earlier attempts to restore the plan of these buildings were Vitruvian (*i.e.*, classic), which, like the Egyptian plans, necessarily failed. We must go for help to Nineveh and Persepolis. Diagram sections are given in “Dictionary of the Bible,” vol. ii. p. 659.



The plan shows the Temple of Solomon with the following labeled areas:

- Temple:** The central structure at the top, including the Altar, Brazen Sea, and Golden Table.
- Outer Court:** The area immediately surrounding the Temple.
- Inner Court:** The area surrounding the Outer Court.
- Gates:** Various gates are marked, including the Gate of David, Gate of the Kings, Gate of the Priests, and Gate of the Women.
- Chambers and Rooms:** Numerous rooms are labeled, including the House of David, House of the Priests, House of the Levites, and various chambers for the priests and Levites.
- Courtyards:** The plan shows several courtyards, including the Outer Court, Inner Court, and various smaller courtyards.
- Other Features:** The plan includes various other features such as the Pool of David, the Pool of the Kings, and the Pool of the Priests.

## GENERAL PLAN OF FERGUSSON'S RESTORATION.



portion was devoted to the use of the Queen consort, the daughter of Pharaoh. Hitherto this princess had lived in a part of David's old palace on Mount Sion, but Solomon has scruples about assigning this to her as a permanent residence, because the site had been hallowed by the temporary sojourn of the Ark. Nothing is said about the structure of the harem, which remained in mysterious seclusion from the public eye. We only know that it must have been magnificent and costly to contain its vast retinue of concubines, and eunuchs, and men and women singers.

As the palace stood on a lower elevation than the Temple, the king built for his private use a staircase of the red and scented sandal wood, which now became an article of import for the wealthy. This precious staircase led to the seats in the Temple, which were specially used for the king on State occasions, of which one seems to have stood in the inner court surrounded by a balustrade, and another was supported on a platform or pediment of brass.<sup>1</sup>

But palaces, however splendid, would have been but dreary residences if they had not easy access to parks and gardens. The laying out of these was a task far from easy in a district so rocky and hilly as that which surrounds Jerusalem. But it had been no small part of the king's care for his people to provide the capital with an elaborate and most costly system of water-courses, derived in part from perennial springs of water on the Temple Mount, and partly from enormous pools, of which the water was conveyed by aqueducts, or through vast subterranean conduits hewn out of the solid rock.<sup>2</sup> By means of this water Solomon was able to provide a king's garden on the southern slopes of the hills on which the city stood,<sup>3</sup> as well as a "House of the Vine" (Beth-hac-Cerem) perhaps near the hill now known as Fureidîs (or "Little Paradise").<sup>4</sup> He also had a beautiful pleasance at Etam, not far from Bethlehem. The ideal Solomon of Ecclesiastes speaks language which could doubtless have been used literally by the real Solomon: "I builded me houses ;

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Kings xi. 14, xvi. 18, xxiii. 3 ; 2 Chron. vi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> On this water system for the supply of Jerusalem are founded the idealized conceptions of the prophets (Joel iii. 18 ; Zech. xiv. 8 ; Ezek. xlvi. 1-12 ; comp. Tacitus, "Hist." v. 12 ; Eusebius, "Præp. Ev." ix. 37 ; Josephus, "B. J." ii. 9, § 4 ; "Antiq." xviii. 3, § 2.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings xxv. 4 ; Neh. iii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. vi. 1.



I planted me vineyards ; I made me gardens and orchards ; I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits ; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." <sup>1</sup>

It is probable also that he had summer retreats, in which he could exchange the parched and sultry air of Judæa for the pleasant breezes cooled by the snows of Lebanon, and for walks overshadowed by its cedars. These may be included among his buildings in this region, mentioned in the Book of Kings,<sup>2</sup> of which tradition preserves a fond recollection in the allusions of the Song of Songs to "the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus," with its gardens and living streams.<sup>3</sup> He also had a vineyard at Baal-Hermon or Baal-Hamon,<sup>4</sup> producing a revenue of which four-fifths was paid to the king.

These works of personal magnificence were accompanied by others of national usefulness. The kingdom which contained such treasures of wealth could not be left defenceless. After Solomon's palaces were completed he turned to the task of fortification. He built Millo (called Acra in the LXX.)—a name given apparently to some wall raised on an earthwork—and thereby "closed the breaches of the City of David," so that no vulnerable point might be left in the circuit of the city. This fortification, as the Septuagint adds (1 Kings x. 22), suppressed the last hopes of the native races. He also protected his entire domain by a chain of forts built at every point of chief access. The fortification of the old Canaanite capital Hazor, at the foot of Lebanon (Judg. iv. 2), gave security to Naphtali and the north from any possible attacks of Rezon, king of Damascus. Megiddo was made defensible to command the rich plain of Jezreel. Gezer, the town which Pharaoh had conquered and given to him as the dower of his daughter, protected the defiles on the west of Ephraim. The walls of Bethhoron, the Upper and the Nether, dominated one of the natural passes leading to Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> Baalath—probably on the borders of Dan—overawed the Philistines. He also built store cities for provisions, and cities to accommodate his cavalry and horses. This branch of his military array was always looked on with distrust, and

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. ii. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings ix. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Cant. vii. 5 ; iv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Cant. viii. 11 (LXX.) ; Judg. iii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> It was the scene of three great battles—the victories of Joshua (Josh. x.), of Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. iii. 13-24), and of the Jews over Cestius Gallus (Josephus, "B. J." ii. 19).



even with hatred, by the stricter Israelites. It was never likely to be of any real service among the rocky ways of a country which over the larger part of its extent is a series of rounded hills. It flourished so little as to be an actual subject of derision to the enemies of Judah.<sup>1</sup>

Some towns he must have also built for the purposes of his extended commerce. They were chiefly in the northern districts, and especially in the direction of Hamath, which he had conquered. Josephus, who follows some magnificent Jewish tradition, says that these towns stood on paved roads which traversed the land in various directions. The main road for the increasing traffic between Egypt and Asia ran past Gaza and west of Jerusalem to Damascus, where it was joined by another road, which led from Tyre to Thapsacus on the Euphrates. To be at once an emporium and a protection for the northern traffic, Solomon built the most famous of all his cities, Tadmor, in the wilderness, the Greek Palmyra.<sup>2</sup> It stood in an oasis, in which there still grow a few palms, and the site was so admirably chosen, and so well supplied with water, that it flourished for a thousand years. Why the words "*in the land*" are added to "in the wilderness" is uncertain, but they probably imply that even this distant oasis belonged to the territory which Solomon had conquered.<sup>3</sup> The ruins sufficiently show to what splendour the city rose. Tradition also assigns to Solomon the building of the Syrian Baalbek, but this is impossible. Baalbek cannot be identified with Baalath, and if Solomon had built this great Syrian city, it would certainly have been mentioned in the royal records of his time.

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Kings xviii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> The text in 1 Kings ix. 18 has Tamar; the margin has Tadmor; 2 Chron. viii. 4 has Tadmor. It always was a city of merchants. Movers tries to identify Tadmor with Hazezon-Tamar, "the sanctuary of the palm," or En-gedi (Ezek. xlvii. 19; xlviii. 28). Tadmor is a day's journey from the Euphrates, and 176 miles from Damascus. It is difficult to believe that it was occupied by Israelites, and the LXX. does not accept the identification.

<sup>3</sup> After "in the land" Ewald would add the words, "of Aram;" Bertheau and Keil would add, "of Hamath;" and Böttcher would read instead, "in the wilderness of Paran."



## CHAPTER X.

### SOLOMON'S COMMERCE.

**The ideal of peaceful wealth—Extended commerce : I. by land and II. by sea**  
—I. Influence and splendour of Phœnicia : i. Land traffic with Tyre ; Hiram and Solomon ; Embarrassed condition of Solomon's resources ; He alienates twenty cities ; Scorn and dissatisfaction of Hiram ; An obscure transaction ; Inexplicable conduct of Solomon ; Prosperity of Hiram—ii. Land traffic with Arabia ; Spices and precious stones—iii. Egypt and the Tanite dynasty ; Land traffic with Egypt ; Horses and chariots ; Profits of the trade ; Two great inland roads—II. Sea traffic : i. The Phœnician traffic with Tarshish—ii. Traffic by the Red Sea to Ophir ; Ezion-Geber—Theories about Ophir ; identified by many with *Abhîra* at the mouths of the Indus—Beautiful and curious articles of export—i. Ivory (*Shen habbîm*)—ii. Apes (*Kôphîm*)—iii. Peacocks (*tukkiîm*)—iv. Almug-trees—Sanskrit origin of these words—Did the fleets circumnavigate Africa?—Result of the commerce—Losses—Intercourse with idolators—The Red Sea fleets a failure—The king's revenue—His enormous expenses—Advantages of the commerce, direct and indirect.

IT would have been in Solomon's power to chose for his people the ideal of military glory which had prevailed in the days of his father ; but he chose instead the ideal of peaceful wealth and material aggrandisement. He might have said to his people, as a modern statesman said to the French bourgeoisie, "*Enrichissez-vous.*" Nothing is more remarkable in his reign than the immense and sudden development of a widely-extended commerce which kindled the imagination of the Chosen People, but which brought them few real advantages, and vanished almost as soon as it had been established. Yet though the special traffic vanished, being almost exclusively connected



with luxuries and with the Court, it gave the earliest strong impulse to those commercial tendencies which totally altered the characteristics of the Jews, and changed them in time from an agricultural into a mercantile race—a race whose famous Rabbis spoke of agriculture in tones of scorn.

This traffic was twofold, by land and by sea : by land, with Tyre, Egypt, and Arabia ; by sea, with Spain, India, and the coasts of Africa.

I. It is not strange that two great neighbouring Powers—Phœnicia and Egypt—should have exercised so strange a spell of fascination over the mind of Israel. Phœnicia—the land of palms—was the representative of enterprise and culture, and the pride of life ; and under the first Hiram, Tyre, which was but a hundred miles from Jerusalem, had sprung to the very summit of her glory. Even the comparatively humble palace of David had been built by Tyrian workmen, and was a “house of cedar,”<sup>1</sup> and from that day forward Phœnician elements began to be mingled with Hebrew civilization. The Tyrians supplied the world with the scarlet robes of kings. The discovery of Tarshish had affected the Phœnicians much as the discovery of the New World affected Spain. It poured into their coffers a flood of wealth. For oil and trinkets their sailors brought back from Tarshish—“the fountains of Tartessus rooted in silver,”—such abundance of precious ore that the very anchors of the homeward-bound vessels were made of silver to save unnecessary freight.<sup>2</sup> Copper (*aes Cyprium*) had long been supplied them from Cyprus, and they brought tin and other metals even from the Scilly Isles. From two to three hundred talents of gold came to them yearly from Tarshish and from the island of Thasos. Their art was at this epoch the most renowned in the ancient world. Their capital was “the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers the honourable of the earth.” The twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel is the splendid epitaph of their magnificence, no less than the prediction of their impending fall. “O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord God ; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.” Judah supplied her with wheat, and comfits, and honey, and oil, and balm.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. v. 11 ; vii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, iv. 152 ; Aristotle, “*De mirab. ausc.*” 147 ; Duncker, “*Hist. of Antiq.*” ii. 85 (E. tr.). Tartessus is the Guadalquivir.



The merchants of Syria traded in her wares for vessels of clay and metal, armour, emeralds, purple brodered work, fine linen, and pearls, and agate. The name Sidon (צִידוֹן), which the Book of Genesis gives to the firstborn of Canaan, means "a fishing," and since about 2,000 years B.C. these maritime cities had enjoyed the riches and blessings of the sea. They had probably been strengthened by emigration at the overthrow of the kingdom of the Hittites by the Amorites about B.C. 1,300, and had gradually spread their settlements towards the north-west. When they had exhausted the fishery of the purple limpet on their own coasts, they obtained it from the Straits of Eubœa and the bays of Hellas. The luxury and commercial prosperity of Tyre, "the joyous city whose antiquity is of ancient days,"<sup>1</sup> seemed inexhaustible, and the wealth and art of Sidon were famous even in the days of Homer.

1. The land traffic with Tyre was chiefly founded on the exigencies of Solomon's architectural undertakings. We have already seen that he would have been unable to construct either the Temple or his palaces without the aid of the skilled wood-carvers and metal-casters of Phœnicia. He is said to have visited Tyre in person, and even to have worshipped in one of the Sidonian Temples. Documents, genuine or spurious, were long preserved, which professed to be an interchange of letters between Hiram and Solomon. For more than twenty years this amicable and mutually advantageous intercourse continued, and, as in the days of Herod Agrippa, Hiram's country "was nourished by the king's country" in return for commercial and artistic benefits. It is even possible that Solomon among his numerous wives may have married a daughter of Hiram, for this is stated by Eusebius on the authority of Tatian,<sup>2</sup> and he tolerated in later days the worship of Astarte in honour of a Sidonian wife.<sup>3</sup> This alliance between the Tyrian and Israelite king had a singular ending, of which the details are excessively obscure. Like all kings, even down to our own day, who have yielded to the passion for building, Solomon embarrassed his resources, immense as they were. Not being a wholly irresponsible despot, he could not afford to be like Louis XIV., who is said to have burnt the accounts of the building of Versailles without looking at them. When the Temple and his

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxiii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Præp. Ev." x. 11.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xi. 5.



palatial buildings were finished, it became necessary to settle his obligations with the king of Tyre, and it seems that the only way left him of doing this was to alienate a part of his own dominions. At the end of twenty years Solomon gave to Hiram "twenty cities in the land of Galilee;"<sup>1</sup> and apparently in return for these Hiram gave Solomon one hundred and twenty talents of gold. Now the alienation of any part of the soil of Judæa was in opposition alike to the letter and spirit of the Mosaic law. "The land shall not be sold for ever," says the Book of Leviticus; "for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."<sup>2</sup> Even if the district had been conquered by Solomon himself, and if the inhabitants were still mainly Canaanites, still the region was within the limits of the Promised Land, and was part of Jehovah's gift to His people.<sup>3</sup> Solomon may have been wholly unaware of the existence of any such law in the complete desuetude into which most of the Mosaic ordinances had fallen, but in any case the voluntary cession of twenty Galilean cities by way of equivalent for a debt might well appear to be a blot on Solomon's administration, and one of the earliest proofs that he had exhausted the capabilities of his treasury. What follows is still more surprising, especially if we are right in supposing that Hiram's one hundred and twenty talents of gold represented the balance after the debt was paid. Hiram went and visited his new acquisition, delighted with the thought that henceforth he would be less wholly dependent on the produce of a rival kingdom, and that Tyre would add an inland district to her strip of sandy coast. A personal visit to the territory disenchanted these hopes, and filled him with vexation. Frankly he considered himself to have been overreached, and inadequately rewarded. The transaction evidently appeared to him to have been a shabby one. The cities "were not right in his eyes." He said, in strong disgust, "What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother?"<sup>4</sup> The very name of the ceded land kept alive for years afterwards the memory of Hiram's disappointment. It was "called Cabul unto this day."

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings ix. 11-14.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xxv. 23, 24.

<sup>3</sup> In Numb. xxxiv. 6-8 the Mediterranean is assigned as the western border of the Promised Land, and it only failed of being so through the supineness of Asher (Judg. i. 31, 32).

<sup>4</sup> "He said to Solomon that *he did not want the cities*" (Josephus).



'Cabul' means "as nothing,"<sup>1</sup> as though Solomon, with all his vaunted magnificence and fabulous generosity, had given to his hereditary ally and friend as good as nothing for the long years of assistance in carrying out designs which could not have been accomplished without his aid.

The sequel of this transaction looks yet more dubious. Solomon did not return the gold, but Hiram did return the cities. Either because of the miry and unproductive character of the soil, or the turbulent poverty of the inhabitants, they were of no use to him, and he did not even care to keep them, foreseeing that they would only be a cause of annoyance and expense. This being so, we might have supposed that, for his own credit and reputation, Solomon would not acquiesce in the imputation of having overreached one whose aid he had so freely used for twenty years, and that he would have given him an even more munificent equivalent. This, however, he either could not or would not do. He quietly took back his rejected gift,<sup>2</sup> and reoccupied with Israelites the twenty despised towns which up to that time seem to have belonged to "*Galilee of the Gentiles*." Of further dealings between Hiram and Solomon we not unnaturally hear no more. Hiram had furnished Solomon with gold as well as timber during the building of the Temple.<sup>3</sup> If he now sent a hundred and twenty talents of gold<sup>4</sup> as an equivalent for the cities, Solomon should have returned it. But the details of the whole transaction are too obscure for us to understand. It is, however, certain that Hiram must have gained from his intercourse with Solomon, for he was an eminently prosperous king. Ascending the throne as a youth, B.C. 1001, he had resubdued the rebellious cities of Cyprus, and had used

<sup>1</sup> Not as in the English margin "displeasing" or "dirty," the meaning also assigned to the word by Josephus. The Authorized Version has "he (*i.e.*, Hiram) called them the land of Cabul," but the verb may be rendered impersonally—"one called them" (LXX., *προσηγορεύθησαν*). There was in this very region a town already called Cabul (Josh. xix. 27) in Asher (nine miles east of Accho), and perhaps Hiram took up the name and played upon it.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings ix. 11-14; Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 5, § 3.

<sup>4</sup> The talent of gold is usually estimated at £6,000. Josephus, quoting Menander, talks of Hiram having to pay large fines for failing to answer riddles; but he represents the hundred and twenty talents as a voluntary present from Hiram to Solomon ("C. Apion." i. 17).



his rich resources in enlarging the island on which Tyre was built and surrounding it with walls of solid masonry. He also built or restored the Temples of Ashtoreth and Melkarth, in the latter of which he dedicated a pillar of gold, seen there by Herodotus five hundred years later by the side of an erect emerald which gave light by night.<sup>1</sup> His reign of thirty-four years seems to have been of unbroken prosperity.

2. Another part of Solomon's land traffic was with Arabia, from which must have been mainly derived the supply of spices of which we now begin to find such prominent mention. The very word spicery (*nêcoth*)<sup>2</sup> is from the Arabic, *naka'at*, and seems to mean gum tragacanth and frankincence, the aromatic resins of various thorny shrubs. Myrrh no doubt formed part of the spicery which the Queen of Sheba gave to him ; spike-nard is the root of a species of valerian which grows in the Himalayas ;<sup>3</sup> aloe is the heart-wood of an Indian tree ;<sup>4</sup> and cassia is the bark of a species of cinnamon. All these became common in the days of Solomon.<sup>5</sup> They may have come to him by sea traffic, but are largely imported throughout the East, and may have been brought chiefly from Eastern Arabia.<sup>6</sup> From this source also he may have derived a great part of his precious stones, though the sapphires (*lapis lazuli*) could only have come from Babylonia.

3. Egypt as well as Phœnicia became a more and more potent factor in the development of the Hebrews under Solomon. The Ramesid dynasty ruled at Thebes till B.C. 1100 ; but under the successors of Rameses VI., from 1200 to 1074, the High Priests of Thebes became almost equally powerful, and at last the twentieth dynasty succumbed. They were succeeded, according to the Egyptian priest Manetho, by seven princes, who belonged to Tanis or Zoan, who reigned for a hundred and fourteen years. We have already given the names of these princes as furnished by the monuments. In Manetho they are different. He says that the first of them was Smendes,

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 44 ; Duncker, ii. 266. The pillar was probably of green glass (Theophrastus, "Lap." 23).

<sup>2</sup> Hebr., Gen. xxxvii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Nardostachys jata-mansi*.

<sup>4</sup> *Aquilaria agallocha*.

<sup>5</sup> Prov. vii. 17 ; Cant. iv. 10, 14, 16 ; Ps. xlv. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Ewald thinks that *nêsheq* in 1 Kings x. 25 means not "armour," but some Arabian perfume.



who removed the seat of government from Thebes, where it had been placed for five centuries, to the Delta. He was succeeded by Psusennes I. who reigned for forty-six years (1048-1002), and was perhaps the protector of the young prince of Edom. The fourth king of this house was Amenothis (998-989), and some have thought this was the Pharaoh who gave his daughter in marriage to Solomon. The last Tanite king was Psusennes II., who in 960 was succeeded by Shishak (Scheshonk, Sesonchis), the founder of the dynasty of Bubastis. Shishak seems to have been of Semitic origin, and to have forced his way to favour, which was cemented by the marriage of his son Osorkon to Rakamat, the daughter of Psusennes. With him ceased the friendly relations between Egypt and Judah. He is the king of Egypt (*Melek Mizraim*), not honoured in 1 Kings xi. 40 with the title Pharaoh, who plundered Jerusalem of the wealth which Solomon had amassed.<sup>1</sup>

The main traffic with Egypt was for the horses and chariots for which the land of the Pharaohs became famous, and which are so prominently represented in the Egyptian frescoes.<sup>2</sup> Solomon kept the profits of this trade, as of all his commerce, in his own hands. He was the kingly merchant, and his people had but a small share of the accruing advantages. The transport was carried on by large caravans, and the trade was extensive because Solomon had not only to keep up his own large supply of four thousand two hundred horses<sup>3</sup> for his fourteen hundred chariots (three fine horses for each chariot), and chargers<sup>4</sup> for his twelve thousand horsemen, but he also found a large demand for these warlike and splendid equipages among all the Hittite and Aramean kings. The Hittites were more or

<sup>1</sup> Africanus and Eusebius allot one hundred and thirty years to the Tanite dynasty. The list of Africanus is, Smendes, Psusennes I., Nephcheres, Amenothis, Bochor, Psinaches, Psusennes II.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xlvii. 17; Exod. ix. 3, xiv. 6; Deut. xvii. 16; 2 Chron. xii. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 24; Isa. xxxi. 1-3; Jer. xlvi. 4; Ezek. xvii. 15, &c. See Böchart, "Hieroz." i. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Forty thousand in 1 Kings iv. 26 is a misreading for four thousand. See 2 Chron. ix. 25.

<sup>4</sup> פָּרָשִׁים. The "dromedaries" of 1 Kings iv. 28 are rather "runners"—i.e., swift riding-horses. In Cant. i. 9 Ewald renders it "Pharaoh's chariots at Solomon's Court." The two towns mentioned in 1 Chron. iv. 31, *Bethmarcaboth*, "house of chariots," and *Hazar-Susim*, "Court of chargers," may be among the cities which Solomon built for his stables.



less tributary, but the various principalities clustering round their chief capitals of Carchemish (Jerablûs) and Kadesh near Emesa, were still under chieftains of such importance that Solomon numbered Hittite princesses among his wives. The Hittites are represented on the Egyptian monuments riding in chariots drawn by two horses, and containing three men apiece.<sup>1</sup> When we are told that in this commerce "a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels, and a horse for a hundred and fifty,"<sup>2</sup> the meaning is disputed; but it seems to be that this was the amount of *profit* on each separate sale. Eight or nine pounds would have been far too small a sum for an Egyptian war-horse, and thirty-five pounds for a chariot, the best of its kind and imported all the way from Egypt. The "linen-yarn" introduced by our Authorized Version<sup>3</sup> into this Egyptian commerce seems to be a pure mistake. The word rendered "linen-yarn" by Le Clerc and other commentators either means (as the Septuagint understands it) "from Coa," or "from Tekoah," as Thenius supposes;<sup>4</sup> or the verse may mean "a drove (or string) of royal merchants used to fetch a drove (or string) of horses at a price."

Two great inland roads were used for these various branches of traffic, and Solomon doubtless improved these roads as well as rendering them more safe and useful by the construction of stations and caravanserais. The khan, or caravanserai, of his hereditary guest Chimham at Bethlehem, which remained famous for so many centuries, may have been one of these. The caravan route from Egypt led through Palestine, and then turned westward across Cœle-Syria to Carchemish on the Euphrates, passing thence across Mesopotamia to Harran, to the Tigris, and thence to Nineveh, Babylon, and the Persian Gulf.<sup>5</sup> The route was perhaps deflected for a time by the building of Tadmor. The second route led along the Western Coast of Arabia through Mecca and Midian into Northern Egypt and Palestine. No doubt both these great arteries of commerce

<sup>1</sup> The Hitittes (or *Khita* as they are called in the monuments), once a powerful and literary people, but now their power was broken. Toi, king of Hamath, was their chief king in David's time.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings x. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. x. 28. The word is מִקְנֵה.

<sup>4</sup> Following the LXX., καὶ ἐκ Θεκουέ.

<sup>5</sup> See Professor Sayce, "The Bible and the Monuments."



were stirred into unwonted activity by the impulse derived from the magnificent designs of the wise king.

II. But far deeper admiration was stirred by his wider and more daring sea commerce, of which we find early traces in Psalm cvii. and in the Book of Proverbs.<sup>1</sup>

1. The sea commerce of the ancients also followed two routes. One of these was exclusively in the hands of the Phœnician sailors of Tyre and Sidon. They sailed from these harbours to Chittim (Cyprus), and so among the Ægean islands, and to Sicily, Malta, and the Northern Coast of Africa. Their ultimate destination was generally Tarshish, the flourishing Phœnician colony in Spain, probably not far from the mouth of the Tartessus or Guadalquivir. In order to reach this they had to sail through Abyla and Calpe (Gibraltar), the famous "Pillars of Hercules" and to launch into the mysterious Atlantic.<sup>2</sup> From this destination the Phœnician merchantmen were called "ships of Tarshish," though they often sailed along the whole coast of Spain, braved the terrors of the Bay of Biscay, and reached as far as the Cassiterides and the southern shores of Britain. Was Solomon allowed to break through the exclusive monopoly of the Phœnicians and to share in this traffic? In the Book of Kings we are told that he had a "Tharshish navy" with the navy of King Hiram,<sup>3</sup> but this may merely apply to his Red Sea traffic, the name "Tharshish navy" being generic to imply ships of a particular build, just as we might talk of "an Indiaman" without necessarily implying that the ship sailed only to India. The commodities mentioned as forming the freight of this Tharshish navy are such as could not come from Spain, nor would a voyage to Tartessus have occupied three years. In the Book of Chronicles we are told that "the king's ships *went to Tharshish* with the servants of Hiram;"<sup>4</sup> but here too the articles imported are the same, and it is possible that some confusion or misunderstanding may have arisen.<sup>5</sup> It hardly seems likely that an

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxiii. 34, 35; Ps. cvii. 23-30.

<sup>2</sup> If Old Hippo was founded by Sidon the Phœnician sailors had done this long before. A passage of Diodorus (v. 19. 2) makes it probable that they had even visited Madeira and the Canaries.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings x. 22.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. ix. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Keil's argument that "at sea" (𐤀𐤓𐤕) can only mean "on the Mediterranean" will hardly stand.



exclusively maritime people would have permitted the partnership of a king who might prove to be a very dangerous rival. It would surely have been impossible for Solomon to keep a separate navy either at Tyre or Sidon, and the miserable and dangerous harbours or roadsteads of Dor, Acco, or Joppa, would have been wholly unsuitable for such a purpose.<sup>1</sup>

2. But much more novel and splendid was the new navigation attempted for the first time from Ezion-Geber to Ophir. Ezion-Geber ("the giant's backbone") was the harbour of Elath, or Eloth, a town at the north of the Gulf of Akaba, and probably on the site now occupied by the wretched village of Akaba itself.<sup>2</sup> Eloth was still a city in the time of Abulfeda (about 1300), but of Ezion-Geber there are no traces. It derived its name from the double line of hills which here run down towards the sea. Hiram and his Tyrians would feel no sort of jealousy about mercantile voyages starting from a port wholly out of their reach, and sailing to regions which they could not independently visit. They were, therefore, quite ready to gain commercial advantages by enabling Solomon to build ships on the Red Sea,<sup>3</sup> and by supplying him with trained mariners. Their share of voyages which brought back four hundred and twenty talents of gold must have been considerable. Solomon was so deeply interested in the venture that he visited Eloth in person, perhaps to see the ships launched.<sup>4</sup> Of the general incidents of these voyages we are unfortunately told nothing, but in Solomon's time Jewish and Phœnician sailors seem to have made their way to the far-distant Ophir. It would be tedious and useless to go through the list of places which have been identified with this famous name. Keil, who has written a special treatise on this commerce of Solomon, maintains that Ophir is neither in

<sup>1</sup> I cannot agree with Prof. Sayce in thinking that Jon. i. 3, Ezek. xxvi. 2, Hosh. xii. 7, show that any real maritime connection ever sprung up between the two kingdoms.

<sup>2</sup> Akaba, according to Ewald, means "back," and is a dialectic variation and abbreviation of Ezion-Geber. Josephus says that in his day it was called Berenice.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 18. This is perhaps the meaning of the statement that Hiram sent him "ships." He might have sent "ships" to Joppa as *models*; otherwise the phrase is perplexing. The Jews never took kindly to the sea-life (Jon. i. 9).

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 17.



India, nor on the East Coast of Africa,<sup>1</sup> but in the southern part of Arabia.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it is now generally identified with *Abhîra*, *i.e.*, the land of “the herdsmen,” at the mouth of the Indus,<sup>3</sup> “inhabited by a people speaking the Dravidian language, allied to the modern Tamil.” Not only are the imports all of them of Indian origin, but the names given to them, with the exception of the gold and silver and precious stones, are wholly unknown to Hebrew. They are Sanskrit words, which even at this early age have undergone dialectic variation. They are the names of ivory, apes, peacocks, and almug wood. It can be easily understood that the inhabitants of the brooding and changeless East were filled with astonishment when for the first time they saw the smooth lustrous ivory used for furniture; and balustrades and harps and psalteries made of the rich-coloured, scented sandal wood. How much greater must have been their amazement when they saw the inexpressible glories of the peacock’s plumage, and grew familiar with that “great iridescent work of God”! Curiosity, and something of horror, must have mingled with the feelings with which they first gazed on the wrinkled, chattering apes with their dreadful caricature of the human face and form—

“*Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia nobis!*”

i. The word used for “ivory” is *shen habbîm*, “tooth of elephants” (LXX., ὀδοντες ἑλεφάντινοι). *Shen*, “tooth,” and *karnoth-shen*, “horns of tooth,” are Hebrew words, but *habbîm* is derived from the Sanskrit *ibhas*, “elephant,” and seems to come direct from the Tamil corruption of the word, preceded by the Semitic article.<sup>4</sup>

ii. The word rendered “apes” is *kophîm*, and is connected with the Sanskrit *kapi*, in the Tamil form of it. The apes

\* Quatremère places it at Sofalá (“Mém. de l’Acad. des Inscr.” 1845)—

“For thee his ivory load Behemoth bore,  
And far Sofala teemed with golden ore.”

Partly because, in Gen. x. 29, Ophir is a son of Joktan.

3 Lassen, “Indische Alterth.” i. 538; Duncker, “Hist. of Antiq.” ii. 265.

4 I take these particulars mainly from Prof. Max Müller’s “Lectures on the Science of Language,” 5th edit., pp. 223-228, who refers to Lassen’s “Indische Alterthumskunde,” i. 537. But some would read “*Shen, habnîm*,” ivory, ebony. Comp. Ezek. xxvii. 15. The plural indicates, as in the case of *algunnim*, &c., that the wood was brought in planks.



meant are perhaps the long-tailed variety common in various parts of India. Apes are mentioned here alone in the Bible. That these apes did not come, as some have conjectured from Gibraltar, seems clear from the fact that the Phœnician vessels might long ago have made them familiar in Palestine if they had been brought from Calpe. They may have been brought in the course of the three years' voyage from South India, or even from Ceylon.

iii. Peacocks are called *tukkiîm*.<sup>1</sup> The word has been understood to mean Numidian birds, delicacies from *Tucca* in Mauretania, or another species of monkey. There is now no doubt that it means the peacock, which in old classical Tamil still bears the name *tôkei*, dialectically pronounced *tôgei*, a name still used on the coasts of Malabar.<sup>2</sup> In modern Tamil *tôkei* only means the peacock's tail. Ivory and apes and gold might come from other countries, but the peacock is indigenous in India alone.

iv. Almug-trees, or, as the Book of Chronicles calls them, algum-trees,<sup>3</sup> have been sometimes taken for the trees which supply the thyine or citron wood of North Africa, which was so much in use among the luxurious Romans ;<sup>4</sup> but they are now believed to be the red sandal wood which is peculiar to India, and of which the temple doors of India are often made.<sup>5</sup> The wood would serve well for the frames of harps and psalteries, though hardly for pillars, as it has no strength.<sup>6</sup> In Sanskrit the sandal-wood tree is called *valguka*, and it is chiefly found on the coast of Malabar.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted by the LXX. Josephus says that the fleets brought home "ivory and *Ethiopians*, and apes."

<sup>2</sup> "It has been derived from the Sanskrit word *sikhin*, meaning, furnished with a crest" (Max Müller).

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. ii. 8, "Send me algum-trees *out of Lebanon*." If it *grew* on Lebanon it must be cypress.

<sup>4</sup> Vulg., *Thyina* ; LXX., *πεύκινα, πελεκητά*—

"Their sumptuous gluttonies and gorgeous feasts,  
On citron table or Atlantic stone" ("Par. Regained," iv.).

<sup>5</sup> In Rabbinical writings *almug* is coral. Josephus, like the LXX., calls it "pine-timber," but says it is whiter and more glittering than the wood of the fig-tree ("Antiq." viii. 7, § 7).

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings x. 12. Perhaps the word rendered "pillars" should be "railings," as in the margin of the Revised Version. In 2 Chron. ix. 11, "stairs" seem to be meant (marg. of Authorized Version).



Some have supposed that the Tharshish-fleets of Solomon sailing from Joppa circumnavigated Africa, and even visited the—

“Farthest Indian isle Taprobane,”

from which they may have derived cinnamon, the aromatic bark of *Cinnamoniūm zeylanicum*. But if they got to Ceylon at all, it is much more likely that they sailed thither direct from Ezion-Geber, through the straits of Babel Mandeb. Phœnician ships would hardly have braved the passage round the “Capo Tormentoso,” to which the optimism of King John of Portugal gave the title of “the Cape of Good Hope.” But the three years occupied by the voyage of Solomon’s mariners from the Red Sea haven would have allowed ample time for the ships to visit the coasts of India;<sup>1</sup> and although it is not of course impossible that the products named might have been obtained from nearer places whither the names of them might also have found their way, yet there is, to say the least, a strong probability that the fleets of Solomon, with their Phœnician and Jewish sailors, did get as far as the mouths of the Indus to which gold and gems might have been brought from the North, and sandal wood, apes, and peacocks from Southern and Central India. In this very spot we find a place which Ptolemy names *Abiria*, and Hindu geographers *Abhîra*,<sup>2</sup> and where recent travellers still find a race of Ahirs, “the descendants, in all probability, of the people who sold to Hiram and Solomon their precious wares.” The identification is very ancient. In the LXX. “Ophir” is translated *Sophir*, and “Sofir” is in Coptic the name for India. The Arabic Versions render it “India.” In the Vulgate, Job xxvii. 16, “it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,” is rendered, “Non conferetur tinctis *Indiæ* coloribus.”<sup>3</sup> Josephus identifies it with the Golden Chersonnese, *i.e.*, the Malay Peninsula.

<sup>1</sup> This was achieved by Pharaoh Necho (Herodotus, iv. p. 42).

<sup>2</sup> The identification of Ophir with *Abhîra* cannot be regarded as certain, but Lassen and Max Müller point out that besides these words here noticed, the Biblical names for “cotton,” “nard,” and “bdëllium,” are of Sanskrit origin, and point to early commercial intercourse between India and Palestine. Ezekiel (xxvii. 13 ff.) is a witness for the wonderful area reached by Tyrian commerce.

<sup>3</sup> Max Müller *l.c.* Mr. Twistleton in the “Dictionary of the Bible,” follows Keil in arguing that Ophir was some port in Arabia, because in Gen. x. “Ophir” is a son of Joktan.



The results of this wide commerce which so dazzled Solomon's contemporaries were far more showy than solid. If it enriched the king, it by no means seems to have enriched the people. Even the king must have been liable to heavy losses, and his gains, whatever they may have been, were neutralized by the overwhelming expenses necessary to maintain the splendour and luxury of a Court arranged upon a scale too ambitious for the resources of his little kingdom. Every branch of the trade seems either to have ceased or languished at the death of Solomon or even earlier. The intercourse with foreign nations often enlarges the intellectual capacities of a rising people, but this is chiefly the case when it introduces them to new and noble forms of literature, or improved conceptions of life. In these respects the Hebrews of that day had little or nothing to learn. They had been chosen for God's people, and had been isolated from the nations around them, in order that they might keep alive the germs of a revelation indefinitely purer than that which was vouchsafed to any other branch of the Semitic or Aryan race. Whatever literature may have been existing in Phœnicia or Egypt a thousand years before Christ, it was valueless by comparison with the oracles of God. Israel contracted the taint of monstrous idolatry, a despotic monarchy, and a disgraceful polygamy, but made no real progress in the art of life. The attempts made to revive the Red Sea commerce were spasmodic and unsuccessful. The chief effort—that made by King Jehoshaphat—ended in the shipwreck of all his vessels in a storm at Ezion-Geber; and when Ahaziah, king of Israel, offered his co-operation it was decidedly refused. Gold and silver and ivory could be got from other quarters; sandal-wood, apes, and peacocks, when the novelty had worn off, were not considered worth the risk and the immense cost of their importation. Neither the Indian wood, nor the Indian bird or animal are once again mentioned in Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

The profits of this expedition are said to have reached 420 talents of gold. The king's annual revenue is stated at 666 talents of gold,<sup>2</sup> which would perhaps be £5,000,000 of our

<sup>1</sup> The "peacocks" in Job xxxix. 13 have no place there. The verse should be rendered, "The wing of the female ostrich beateth joyously: is it a kindly pinion and plumage?"

<sup>2</sup> The fact that Hengstenberg and others should connect this accidental number of talents with the number of the Beast (!) in the Book of Revela-



money. This did not include the profits of his commerce, whether derived from "merchantmen," or (as the Revised Version renders the word) chapmen or itinerant traffickers, or other traders;<sup>1</sup> or from "the tribute of the subject people;"<sup>2</sup> or from all the kings of the mingled people,<sup>3</sup> or the governors of provinces. It is amazing to think that so immense a revenue should so soon have been dissipated. But nothing consumes the wealth of kings so rapidly as magnificent buildings.

Although the commercial side of Solomon's activity was not without its drawbacks, there can be no doubt that it had counterbalancing and permanent advantages, both direct and indirect. Among the latter may be mentioned the construction of better roads, which is always a powerful element in advancing civilization. We should infer that Solomon's attention was turned in this direction from the necessities of the case. His roads are not specially mentioned in Scripture, but Josephus tells us that "he did not neglect the care of the ways, but laid a causeway of black stone along the roads which led to Jerusalem which was the royal city, both to render them easy for travellers, and to manifest the grandeur of his riches and government." The black stone was perhaps basalt. It is true that in modern Palestine there are scarcely any traces of such roads, but the same remark applies to the great military road from north to south constructed by the Romans a thousand years later.<sup>4</sup>

tion, a number which, like the 888 of the name Jesus in the Sibylline books, is decided simply by the fact that the numerical value of "Neron Kesar" (the Emperor Nero), in Hebrew letters is 666—shows the wildly absurd principles, or no principles, which have dominated for so many thousands of years in the so-called "interpretation" of Scripture.

<sup>1</sup> The "spice merchants" of our Authorized Version in 1 Kings x. 15 is a mistake.

<sup>2</sup> LXX., 1 Kings x. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Where by mistake the Authorized Version reads "Arabia"; LXX., τῶν βασιλέων τοῦ πέραν.

<sup>4</sup> See Grätz, i. 328.



## CHAPTER XI.

### SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY.

**Visitors and presents—Royal state—Solomon, on a progress, as described by Josephus—As described in the Song of Songs—A nuptial psalm (Ps. xlv.)—Allusion to Solomon by our Lord—Other allusions—His ivory throne—Visit of the Queen of Sheba—Traditions about the Queen of Sheba—Legends of her visit and questions—Her admiration of his buildings and his magnificence—Interchange of presents—Naturalization of the balsam-plant—Our Lord's allusion—Summary of Solomon's wealth and grandeur.**

HISTORY, Poetry, and Legend combine to magnify the splendour of Solomon. Many visitors flocked yearly to Jerusalem to witness the magnificence of the great king, to see his temple, to hear his wisdom, and to admire his foreign curiosities ; and, according to the Eastern custom, none of these came empty-handed. Some of them brought presents of gold and of silver ; others brought rich garments from Babylon and Tyre ; others brought armour,<sup>1</sup> spices, horses, and mules. The habits of the Court were completely changed. Saul, in his rustic kingliness, even David in his warlike simplicity, would have gazed with astonishment on this outburst of Egyptian gorgeousness. But Solomon profited in some respects by the fact that both Egypt and Assyria during his day were under temporary eclipse, so that he filled an unusually large space in the eyes of his contemporaries.

Even David and Absalom had been content to ride on mules, as Solomon himself had done when he was first appointed king. But now he never rode forth except in one of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings x. 25 ; the word is of doubtful meaning.



"Pharaoh's chariots," which were so elegant and bright as to be compared to a lovely maiden.<sup>1</sup> The prosaic narrative of Josephus and the soft poetry of the Canticles alike describe the traditional reminiscences of the king's pomp and luxury as he went to visit his well-watered garden at Etam, or was carried in his luxurious palanquin to his summer retreats amid the hills of myrrh and the leopard-haunted woods of Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> Josephus tells us that when he started from Jerusalem for his gardens, he would ascend one of his glittering chariots at early dawn to ride down the green windings of the Wady Urtâs. The chariot was doubtless one of the choicest of those which had been imported from Egypt, and resembled the richly-chased and brilliantly-coloured cars in which we see the kings of Egypt represented at peaceful ceremonies in their temple frescoes. It was drawn by swift and stately horses magnificently caparisoned, and was followed by a train of archers, riding on war-horses, in purple attire. They were youths chosen to be of the king's bodyguard for their beauty and stature, and "their long black hair flowed behind them, powdered with gold-dust, which glittered in the sun as they galloped along after their master."<sup>3</sup>

Yet more brilliant is the picture delineated in the Song of Songs. Leaning from her lattice, the lovely Shulamite sees a dim cloud coming up from the pasture-land, which seems to breathe of myrrh and frankincense. - It is indeed the smoke of delicious spices burnt before the advance of a royal visitor. As it approaches nearer she recognizes the flashing armour of the Gibborim, or "mighty-men," who form the king's bodyguard. Their swords are girded on their thighs, and sixty of the most valiant of them are ranged around a chariot-litter to protect Solomon from the brigands who might attack him in the night. As the cavalcade approaches, she sees the splendour of the royal palanquin. It is made of cedar wood, its pillars are of silver, its floor of gold, its cushions of purple, its carpet of rich embroideries, woven for him as a token of love by the maidens of Jerusalem. Inside it sits the king himself, wearing his royal crown, the jewelled crown which

<sup>1</sup> Cant. i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. xi. 6 ; Cant. iv. 8 ; Robinson, "Palestine," i. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 7, § 3.



his mother placed upon his head on the day when he married the Princess of Egypt. Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and gaze upon King Solomon !<sup>1</sup>

In manlier tones than those of the Song of Songs a psalmist describes another phase of this many-sided splendour in what is called "a song of loves," written for the sons of Kōrah to a tune called "Lilies." He describes the king as fairer than the sons of men, his lips full of grace, his life enriched with blessings. With his sword upon his thigh he rides prosperously forth, capable of terrible deeds, but only in the cause of truth, mercy, and righteousness. His arrows shall be in the heart of his enemies ; his Divine throne and righteous sceptre shall be for ever. Because he has loved righteousness and hated iniquity God has anointed him with the oil of gladness above all other kings. His garments breathe forth perfumes of Arabian and Indian spices, and music makes him glad out of his ivory palaces. Among his loved ones are the daughters of kings, and pre-eminent among them stands at his right hand the queen, as in a blaze of light, clothed in garments richly covered with the wrought gold of Ophir, in which she has been carried from the inner palace on tapestries of needlework, surrounded by her virgin companions, amid a burst of rejoicing melodies. The gazing multitude exult in her

<sup>1</sup> Cant. iii. 6-11. We may borrow a few illustrative lines from Mr. Browning's "Popularity" :

"Who has not heard how Tyrian shells  
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes,  
Whereof one drop worked miracles,  
And coloured like Astarte's eyes  
Raw silk the merchant sells ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Enough to furnish Solomon  
Such hangings for his cedar-house,  
That, when gold-robed he took the throne,  
In that abyss of blue, the Spouse  
Might swear his presence shone.

Most like the centre-spike of gold  
Which burns deep in the bluebells' womb,  
What time, with ardours manifold,  
The bee goes singing to her groom,  
Drunken and over-bold."



beauty, in her submissiveness, in the love for her husband which has caused her to forget her Egyptian home. Kneeling before her the rich among the people entreat her favour with presents, and among them are the representatives of Tyre with their purple merchandize. The poet promises that in place of the father she has left the queen shall have children whom she may make princes in all lands, and he ends with the prophecy that the king's name shall be remembered in all generations, and praised among all peoples.<sup>1</sup>

And when our Lord sat on the green hill slope of Kurn Hattîn, beside the Galilean lake, and saw the fields around Him bright with the scarlet anemone and the golden amaryllis, and wished to teach the people the lesson of trust in God, He said that these "lilies of the field" toil not neither do they spin, "and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

We have already seen that this personal magnificence seems to have been adopted in imitation of the Courts of Egypt and Tyre. Of the splendour of the Egyptian kings we have ample proofs in the pictures and inscriptions of their monuments. In the prophet Ezekiel we find descriptions of Tyre and her kings, which read like a page from the story of Solomon. The king of Tyre is reminded that he is a man and not a god, though he set his heart as the heart of God, and was wiser than Daniel, and no secret was hid from him. "Thou sealest up the measure, full in wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God ; every precious stone was thy covering, the ruby, the topaz, the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, the carbuncle, and gold ; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee. . . . Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth ; and I set thee so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God ; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." If Solomon made silver to be as stones, so Tyre "built herself strongholds and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlv. Delitzsch refers the psalm to Joram, "the son of Jehoshaphat, the second Solomon of Jewish history," and thinks that it refers to his nuptials with Athaliah. Dean Perowne, and most others, refer it to Solomon.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxvii., xxviii. ; Zech. ix. 3.



Yet another picture may be derived from the Book of Ecclesiastes, with its allusions to Solomon's great works—his houses and vineyards, his gardens and paradises, his pools and fruit-trees, his hosts of slaves, his herds of cattle, his men-singers and women-singers, and musical instruments, and chariots, and palanquins, and all the delights of the sons of men. But the best of all his glory was that, for many years, the people were happy with a natural prosperity, and so shared in the blessings of wealth and peace. The "ships of Tarshish" brought to Solomon "the abundance of the sea;" the kings of Tarshish and the Isles brought presents, and the kings of Sheba and Saba offered gifts; the long lines of camels and dromedaries, laden with gold and incense, passed through the streets; the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth were slain for the royal table; sons of strangers built the palace walls, and tributaries brought their silver and their gold. But the people had yet more legitimate reason for their pride in their monarch in the early years of his reign. Peace flourished out of the earth throughout a dominion which extended from sea to sea, and even on the mountain-tops the corn shook like the cedar-boughs of Lebanon. Like rain upon the mown grass, and showers upon the dry land, his justice and beneficence refreshed the poor of his people.<sup>1</sup> Judah and Israel were at one. Ephraim did not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim, but they alike dwelt safely each under his own vine and his own fig-tree from Dan even to Beersheba in the days of Solomon, drinking, and making merry,<sup>2</sup> and multiplying like the sands of the sea, so that the very names given to the children indicated the weal and growth of the people.

No account of Solomon in all his glory could pass over the mention of his "throne of royal state" so famous in Eastern legend. It resembled, and perhaps surpassed, the thrones of the Pharaohs which we see on the monuments of Egypt. It was a throne of ivory inlaid with gold of Uphaz. It was ascended by six steps, on each side of which stood a golden lion, the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the natural emblem of sovereignty. Besides these twelve, each of the arms of the chair was guarded by a golden lion, and the king's feet rested on a golden footstool. According to the Rabbis the

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxii.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings iv. 20-25.



rounded back of the chair was formed by the figure of a bull—meant, doubtless, for the bull of Ephraim—of which the head looked backwards.<sup>1</sup> Upon the throne he sat to give judgment, robed, no doubt, in purple—

“Livelier than Melibœan or the grain  
Of Sarra worn by kings and heroes old  
In time of truce;”

while his magnificence only served to set forth the proud personal beauty which seems to have been a common inheritance of the sons of David, and which made him “the chiefest among ten thousand.”

The culminating point of this career of magnificence was the visit of the Queen of Sheba, or as she is called in the Gospel of St. Matthew, “the Queen of the South.”<sup>2</sup> According to Josephus the name of this queen was Nikaule, and he apparently identifies her with the Nitokris of Herodotus,<sup>3</sup> regarding her as a Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia.<sup>4</sup> Hence the Æthiopian Christians have invented a legend that her home was Makeda, and that she became one of the wives of Solomon, and had by him a son named Melimelek, the ancestor of their line of kings.<sup>5</sup> The Arabs, on the other hand, have given her the name of Balkis, and surrounded her story with endless legends.<sup>6</sup> There can be no doubt that Sheba (שְׁבָא) —which is quite different from Seba (סְבָא), the name given to Meroe and Ethiopia—was a country in Arabia Felix, famous for its traffic in gold, frankincense, and precious stones. The queen, whose country was affected by Solomon’s commerce, heard of “his fame concerning

<sup>1</sup> This may be due to some mistake between לָגוֹל “round,” and לָגֹל “a calf;” whence the reading of the LXX., προτομαὶ μόσχων, “busts of calves.” For lions on thrones see Layard’s “Nineveh,” ii. 30. Of course the throne could only have been *veneered* with ivory, like the “ivory palaces” and towers of Ps. xlv. 8; Cant. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, “Antiq.” viii. 6, § 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ludolf, “Hist. Æthiop.” ii. 3. The Ethiopians call him Menilehek, which has no true derivation in Ethiopic; and also *ibn-el-haqîm*, “son of the wise” (Ludolf, *l.c.*).

<sup>6</sup> Qur’ân, Sur. xxvii. 20-45. For some of the legends about her see D’Herbelot, s.v. Balkis, Weil, “Bibl. Leg.” 194-211



the name of the Lord ;”<sup>1</sup> heard of him, doubtless, as a king who had built the great Temple to Jehovah, and perhaps heard the rapidly formed Eastern legends about the power which he acquired from his devotion to the mysterious, unpronounced, incommunicable Name. Now the wit and wisdom of the East is, to a large extent, enshrined in proverbs, and tested by riddles and the solution of dark sayings ;<sup>2</sup> and the Queen of Sheba was so deeply stirred by the rumours that came to her, that she determined to see this marvellous king and to test his vaunted wisdom with hard questions. Deep, indeed, must have been her yearning, and great his fame which induced a secluded Arabian queen to break through the immemorial customs of her dreamy land, and to put forth the energy required for braving the burdens and perils of so long a journey across the wilderness. Yet this she undertook, and carried it out with safety. Jerusalem long remembered the “very great train of her camels bearing spices and very much gold, and precious stones.” She at once began to try whether the king’s wit and wisdom corresponded to the fame of them. There is nothing impossible in some at least of the persistent legends about the nature of her questions. One of her tests was to dress a number of girls and boys in the same dress, and to bid Solomon tell the boys from the girls. He ordered basins of water to be brought, and bade them wash their hands. The boys from habit at once put their hands in the water, the girls stopped to turn back their sleeves. The queen then held in her hands two bouquets—one of real and one of artificial flowers, and asked Solomon, without moving from his throne, to distinguish between them. He ordered the lattice to be opened ; the bees came in, and began to settle on the real flowers.<sup>3</sup>

When she had tested his ready discrimination and acumen she “communed with him of all that was in her heart,” and

<sup>1</sup> The expression is very frequent in 1 Kings viii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, &c. Of the Fathers, Origen and Augustine make her a queen of Ethiopia ; Justin, Cyprian, and others, more correctly, of Southern Arabia. See Pineda, “De rebus Salomonis,” v. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus said that she sought some mitigation of intellectual difficulties —*λύσαι τὸ ἄπορον τῆς διανοίας δεηθεῖσα*. Comp. Matt. xii. 42.

<sup>3</sup> In the Second Targum on the Book of Esther we read that Solomon received the queen seated on a throne upon a floor of glass. She thought that he was sitting in the midst of water.



Solomon satisfied to the full all her desire for knowledge. After that he showed her his palace and its surroundings. She saw him seated on the unrivalled lion-throne of gold and ivory, dispensing justice in the pillared hall of cedar. She saw him seated at the banquet, at his table<sup>1</sup> covered with the richest delicacies brought from distant lands in boundless profusion. She saw the vessels and lavers of pure gold,<sup>2</sup> and the goblets for wine, the great guests seated at the table, and the retinue of gorgeously-attired attendants,<sup>3</sup> and the various stringed instruments framed in aromatic wood. She saw him ride abroad in his Egyptian chariot among his bodyguard. She could not, indeed, enter the courts of the Temple, or examine its molten sea, and its carvings of palm and lotus and cherubim, for she was a heathen ; but she saw the golden shields carried before him as he went thither in state, and the mound across the valley, and the gilded sandal-wood staircase by which he ascended to the House of the Lord.<sup>4</sup> Doubtless, too, she saw the foreign curiosities—the rare perfumes, the wrinkled apes, the gleaming peacocks sunning their magnificent plumage about the courts and by the garden fountains. She was struck dumb with amazement by all that she had witnessed ; “there was no more spirit in her.” She confessed that she had been unable to believe the rumours which had told of the king’s wisdom and prosperity, but that the reality exceeded the fame. Happy were the servants and courtiers who stood by him, and heard his wisdom ;<sup>5</sup> blessed was the Lord his God who delighted in him, and who out of love for Israel had given them such a king to do judgment and justice among them.

The visit ended in an interchange of royal presents. The

<sup>1</sup> The Gothic kings of Spain had a golden table which passed for the table of Solomon.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings x. 21 ; LXX., λουτήρες χρυσοῖ.

<sup>3</sup> The word rendered “cupbearers” means *repotatoria*, the whole drinking apparatus. The Hebrew has “the *sitting* of his servants (*i.e.*, great officers), and the *standing* of his ministers.”

<sup>4</sup> The words rendered “and his ascent” (1 Kings x. 5, וַעֲלֵיתוּ), are possibly a corruption of וַעֲלֵיתוּ, “and his *burnt-offering* which he offered in the House of the Lord,” as in the margin of the Revised Version ; and as we read in 2 Chron. ix. 4 ; LXX., τὴν ὁλοκαύτωσιν, τὰ ὁλοκαυτώματα. The mistake, however, may be in the *latter* passage and not in this.

<sup>5</sup> The Septuagint, Syriac. and Arabic here read “happy are *thy wives*.”



queen gave to Solomon a hundred and twenty talents of gold,<sup>1</sup> and precious stones, and very great store of such spices from "Araby the Blest," as were never equalled at any period of the kingdom. Among these spices was some of the real Arabian balsam, and Josephus tells us the interesting fact that, in consequence of her visit, the balsam-plant was naturalized in the famous gardens at Jericho,<sup>2</sup> which many centuries later still continued to yield a large income to the Herodian princes. Solomon was not to be outdone in munificence by the Arabian queen. Beside the usual return of presents "he gave unto her all her desire, whatsoever she asked," so that she returned with a glad heart to her native land.

Her visit was by no means the only one which made this reign remarkable, for "all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart." These were forgotten, but the visit of the Queen of Sheba was immortalized by a thousand legends, and remembered to the latest generations. The allusions to King Solomon in the New Testament are exceedingly few, but in one of these our Lord draws a lesson from the bright example of this queen. "The queen of the south," He said, "shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it ; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

We cannot be sure of the date of various sayings in the Book of Proverbs, but they indicate the immense development of kingly power. Superhuman insight and a Divine power of judgment are attributed to kings.<sup>3</sup> And when we read of the dizzy elevation to which kings were upraised by the popular submission, we can well understand that even a true and noble nature could hardly fail to degenerate amid the isolation of such splendour.<sup>4</sup>

The emphatic summary of all this magnificence is that "the king made silver," or, according to the Greek translation, "gold and silver," to be in Jerusalem as stones, and the cedars made

<sup>1</sup> Josephus ("Antiq." viii. 6, § 6) says, with more probability, twenty talents. Even this would be £12,000. The reading hundred and twenty may be an accidental reminiscence of ix. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 6, § 6.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xvi. 10, xx. 8, xxv. 2 ; 2 Sam. xiv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Prov. xxx. 24-31 ; xvi. 14, 15 ; xxi. 1 ; xxv. 3.



he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the Shefelah<sup>1</sup> for multitude. The description is a hyperbole, but it marks the prosaic fact, otherwise traceable, that a rapid and serious depreciation took place in the value of silver. In former days ten shekels had been enough yearly salary for a Levite minister, and that Levite no less a person than Jonathan, the grandson of Moses; now two hundred shekels was the pay of a vineyard keeper, and six hundred shekels was paid for a single chariot.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Authorized Version, "the vale"; Revised Version. "the lowland" (1 Kings x. 27).

<sup>2</sup> See Judg. xvii. 10; Can'. viii. 11.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DECLINE OF SOLOMON.

**An unsubstantial pageant**—Solomon's heart not "perfect"—Two deadly evils—What a king ought *not* to do : 1. The multiplication of horses ; 2. Accumulations of treasure ; 3. Polygamy—Number of his wives—Evils of polygamy—Solomon's apostasy—Moral deterioration—Influence of strange wives—Unreal tolerance : 1. Worship of Ashtoreth ; 2. Of Milcom ; 3. Of Chemosh—Idol shrines on "the mount of corruption"—Evil effects of extravagant luxury—Grievous bondage felt by the people—Expense of maintaining the Court—A Divine warning—The growth of adversaries—Degeneracy of the people, and of the youth—Illustrated in the advice of the "young men" to Rehoboam—Torpor of the priesthood—Silence of the prophets—Jeroboam ; his early life, his rapid rise, his politic bearing—Ahijah the Shilonite—Symbol of the disruption of the kingdom—Jeroboam begins to plot and is forced to fly into Egypt—Alienation of Egypt under Shishak I.—Close of the reign—Gifts and character of the king—Three stages in his career : 1. His early prosperity ; 2. The zenith of his glory ; 3. His decline—"Vanity of vanities"—Arabian legend of his death—His life less interesting than that of David—Doubts expressed as to his salvation—Orcagna—Vathek—Dante—Services which Solomon rendered—The darker aspect of his reign—The *true* Jedidiah.

THE glory of Solomon vanished like an unsubstantial pageant, and left nothing behind it but a vague memory. The true golden age of the Jewish past was far more the age of their hero-poet David, with its outburst of song and golden deeds, than the Byzantine gorgeousness of Solomon, which the sequel proved to be splendid with the colourings of decay.

The Book of Kings, with a play upon his name, which if intentional has a certain grimness of its own, says that when he was old—though he could not have been more than fifty-five—his



wives turned away his heart, "and his heart was not perfect (שלם *shalêm*) with Jehovah."<sup>1</sup> The Book of Chronicles, after dwelling on the ideal of his glory, his building of the Temple, his prayers, and his commerce, refers to the prophets who had acted as his historiographers, and adds only that he slept with his fathers.

Two deadly evils lurked behind the superficial brilliancy, and wrought incredible harm to king and people—the curse of polygamy and the curse of despotism. The primitive simplicity of the monarchy was nobler, though less showy, than this iridescence of moral stagnancy and luxurious decline.

There must have been many who watched with unfavourable eyes the displacement of national simplicity by alien magnificence. Strange and apparently universal as was the desuetude into which the provisions of the Mosaic law had fallen, and little as Solomon seems to have been conscious of the obliteration of Mosaic conceptions which was manifest in his proceedings, it is clear from the Book of Deuteronomy that he was doing in every direction the very things which were least in accordance with the true ideal of kingly power among the Chosen People.<sup>2</sup> Three things had been specially forbidden to the theocratic sovereign, and all these three things Solomon conspicuously did. If we judged by that passage alone we should think that Solomon was held up as the example of everything which a king ought not to be.

1. He had been forbidden to multiply horses, or to send caravans to Egypt for the purpose of procuring horses, because intercourse with Egypt was held to be undesirable, and God had said, "Ye shall henceforth no more return that way." Yet Solomon's traffic in horses, and the sums for which he procured them for the kings of the Hittites and of Syria were among the most memorable features of his land commerce.

2. He had been forbidden to aggrandize himself by excessive accumulations of silver and gold ; and Solomon had made it a part of his glory to make silver as stones in Jerusalem, so that it was nothing accounted of because of the abundance of gold of Ophir.

<sup>1</sup> There may be no special *paronomasia* to the name *Shelomoh* for the same phrase occurs in 1 Kings viii. 60. It is the root of *Islam*, *Moslem*.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xvii. 16, 17.



3. He had been forbidden to multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away ; and he loved many strange women besides the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Amorites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites.<sup>1</sup> And the prophesied result had followed to this

“Uxorious king, whose heart though large,  
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell  
To idols foul.”

It has been charitably supposed by some that these wives and concubines were regarded in the light of hostages, and that their multiplication from among heathen nations with which affinity had been expressly forbidden,<sup>2</sup> was due rather to the thirst for power than to the love of pleasure. The sacred historians give no opening for any such palliating conclusion. The most ancient and trustworthy of them says expressly that “Solomon clave unto them in love.”

The number given might seem not only unparalleled, but even incredible. He had, we are told, 700 wives and 300 concubines. We must remember that Solomon was only the king of a very small and comparatively unimportant kingdom, yet this number of 1000 inmates in a single seraglio is greater than that recorded of the most absolute potentates in the greatest kingdoms of the world. The largest harem of which we read either in ancient or modern days was that of Darius Codomannus, and of him we are only told that he had one wife and 329 concubines.<sup>3</sup> It is hard to suppose that the Canaanite and surrounding tribes could have furnished seven hundred “princesses,” and still harder to imagine how Solomon’s palace, had its dimensions been tenfold greater than they were, could have found room in their women’s apartments for a harem of one thousand, with their very numerous necessary attendants.<sup>4</sup> We cannot venture to alter the text, but

<sup>1</sup> Wives from the two last nations were explicitly forbidden (Exod. xxxiv. 12-16). In Deut. vii. 3, marriages with Canaanites are expressly forbidden, yet Salmon married Rahab, David married Maacah.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 11-16 ; Deut. vii. 1-4 ; Ezra ix. 2, x. 3 ; Nehem. xiii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Parmen. *ap.* Athen., “Deipn.” iii. 3. According to Curtius there were with him “*regiae pellices trecentæ sexaginta*,” “Vit. Alex.” iii. 3. Comp. Rosenmüller, “A. u. N. Morgenland,” iii. 181. A scarabæus of Amen-hotep (p. iii.) mentions that he had more than 317 wives. Brugsch, “Egypt.” iii. 607 (E. tr.).

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 9 ; 2 Kings viii. 6, ix. 32, xx. 18 ; Jer. xxix. 2, xxxiv. 19 ; Esther i. 10, &c.



we must either suppose textual corruption, or some immense Oriental hyperbole, or the inclusion of all the female attendants in the sum-total. Probably for seven hundred we should read seventy; and in any case the statement conflicts with that of Canticles, where we read that Solomon had sixty wives and eighty concubines, to which, however, are added "and virgins without number." It may indeed be truly said that we should expect a late poem to be far less historical than an early prose history; but, on the other hand, it is in the fancies of the poem that we should look for exaggeration rather than in a sober narrative. The notice in the Canticles points to a possible source of the most deadly unpopularity. If all true servants of the ancient theocracy could hardly have failed to look with deep disfavour on Solomon's polygamy, how much would that disfavour have been intensified among the Chosen People if their own daughters were doomed to the gilded dishonour of an immense seraglio! The story of the Canticles, while it points in this direction, happily shows us also that there were maidens in Israel who preferred a poor and humble love to a languid share in the society rather than the heart of a luxurious king.

There can hardly be a doubt that, among other abuses and degradations, eunuchs made their disastrous appearance at the Court of Solomon. "Such insects," says an old historian, "gather in such palaces like flies in a summer day." In a large harem they become all but inevitable, and are therefore found wherever that form of polygamy exists. It is true that they are mentioned but once, and that only in the Court of David, where the Authorized and Revised Versions read "officers" (1 Chron. xxviii. 1). On the other hand, Samuel had distinctly mentioned them among the crowd of rapacious plunderers whose greed their kings would have to satisfy (1 Sam. viii. 15). In later reigns, if the word *sarîs* is to be understood literally, they became a phenomenon as common as they were discreditable in the Israelite as in the Persian courts.<sup>1</sup> But at the best the lives spent in Eastern courts and harems gives occasion to every form of immorality, misery, and *ennui*. It provokes the jealous and raging rivalries of aimless women demoralized by luxury and

<sup>1</sup> Cant. vi. 8. Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 21) had 18 wives and 60 concubines; but whereas Solomon only left (so far as we know) one son and two daughters, Rehoboam had 28 sons and 60 daughters. The Talmud limits a king's wives and concubines to 18 (Otho, "Lex. Rabb." p. 518).



idleness, who have nothing to do but to quarrel with each other, and to intrigue for the royal favour with their mean, pampered, and dehumanized attendants.<sup>1</sup>

It is a remarkable fact that the highly-eulogistic Chronicler passes over Solomon's fall entirely, and makes no mention either of the shameful number of his wives or of his strange apostasy. For an apostasy we must call it, as St. Augustine does. In his early days, "he loved the Lord," but the historian tells us distinctly, that when Solomon was old "his wives turned away his heart after other gods ; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God as was the heart of David his father."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that this backsliding is said to have taken place when he was old, whereas he could not have been more, and was probably less, than sixty years old even when he died, seems to show that the force of his will was much broken by enervating self-indulgence. Like Samson, he had become too weak to withstand the constant pressure of feminine importunity. But besides this we must allow for the sort of latitudinarianism and sense of political expediency which must of necessity have been introduced into such a mind as that of Solomon by incessant intercourse with heathen dynasts, and the ambition to imitate their ways. Possibly some tendency to tamper with magic and sorcery, and to pry into the secrets of the future, may have added another element of deterioration.<sup>3</sup> Sensuality led to religious indifference, and indifference to absorbing worldliness, which ended in the most daring violations of God's most emphatic and express commands. It had been sufficiently objectionable to contract alliances with idolaters, and to make no effort to induce their acceptance of a purer faith. But if this laxity might for special reasons have been condoned ; if

<sup>1</sup> See Oort, "Bible for Young People," iii. 48 (E. tr.).

<sup>2</sup> There is a curious piece of casuistry in the Talmud : "Whoever says that Solomon sinned is decidedly wrong. . . . His wives turned away his heart *to walk* after other gods, but he did not go. . . . But what of 1 Kings xi. 7 ? He *intended* to build a high place for Chemosh, but did not build it " (Shabbath, f. 56. 2 ; comp. Sanhedrin, f. 55. 56). All that can be said for Solomon is that he is not stated personally to have "*served*" other gods.

<sup>3</sup> Suidas (s.v. 'Εζεκίας) quoted by Dean Plumptre, says that Hezekiah found (magic ?) formulæ for the cure of disease engraved on the posts of the Temple, and destroyed them because they tended to idolatry. The Dean thinks that this may be the clue to the severe condemnation of Asa for "seeking to the physicians" and not to the Lord (2 Chron. xvi. 12).



psalmists exquisitely sang his nuptials with Pharaoh's daughter, and so far as we know, no prophet interposed ; the least, surely, which could have been expected was that the rites of heathendom for these alien queens should only have been permitted in the most private manner, and with the least offensive forms. So far was this from being the case, that though Solomon probably continued his three great annual visits to the Temple, he not only tolerated, but encouraged, and that openly, the exercise of heathen rites in close neighbourhood to the Temple which he might well seem to have built in vain. We are able to mark in this respect a distinct degeneracy. At first he had been uneasy at the mere presence of Pharaoh's daughter in the City of David because it had been hallowed by the presence of the Ark of God.<sup>1</sup> For her he seems to have built no temples.<sup>2</sup> In all probability she died early, for after the completion of the palace we hear of her no more. [But for the sake of his other wives he lent to idolatry the sanction not only of tolerance, not only of acquiescence, but of direct participation in the most revolting forms of superstition.] The bare mention of the fact in the Book of Kings affords us no measure of the depth of his fall. If we are to take the statement literally he offered burnt-offerings and thank-offerings on stated occasions during all his life upon the great brazen altar, and also burnt incense. The case is thus made much worse.<sup>3</sup> The worship of Jehovah was rigidly and jealously exclusive whenever it was in any way sincere. But Solomon's devotions became not merely eclectic, but were a syncretism of the most glaringly contrasted and violently opposing elements, between which no union was for a moment possible. Like the dregs of a mixed population which the kings of Assyria placed in Samaria—an ignorant multitude, who "feared the Lord and served their own gods"<sup>4</sup>—so Solomon,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Some have even supposed that she became a proselyte. The Talmud however says, "When Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, she brought to him a thousand different kinds of musical instruments, and taught him the chants to the various idols" (Shabbath, f. 56. 2).

<sup>3</sup> 1 King ix. 25. The verse suggests several unanswered questions. Does the "three times in a year" refer to the three yearly feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles? Is it intended that the king performed these sacerdotal acts—even the burning of incense—with his own hands? What is the exact meaning of the obscure phrase, "upon the altar" (Revised Version "therewith")?

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 33.



but with infinitely less excuse, worshipped alike in the Temple of Jehovah and in that of Chemosh, and that not only in secrecy, but publicly on the hill opposite his own palace and Temple.<sup>1</sup> In addition to all the other influences which led him astray, we may perhaps account the exaltation of a knowledge which, when it ceased to be humble and sanctified, inflated him with a vain sense of superiority to what he may have begun to disdain as the provincial prejudices of his own people.<sup>2</sup> Beguiled by the conceit of a cold intellectualism, and blinded by the dizzy solitude of an autocrat, the author of the spiritual and impassioned prayer at the Dedication of the Temple sanctioned the hideous nature-worship which degenerated into the apotheosis of cruelty and lust. For Solomon "went after"—in other words, idolatrously worshipped<sup>3</sup>—Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians.<sup>4</sup> This was the goddess

"Whom the Phœnicians call  
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns,  
To whose bright image nightly by the moon  
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs."

One of the chief towns of Bashan was called after her, Ashtaroth Karnaim, "Ashtoreth of the two horns," or "the crescent moon."<sup>5</sup> It is needless to attempt to characterize her cultus, which in different Semitic nations assumed widely different forms. We may, however, venture to hope that this adoration of the moon and of the heavenly hosts assumed a purer form among the early Phœnicians than it did in later ages, and among other peoples. In the form of it which Solomon permitted, and in which he even joined, it can hardly have been stained with the worst aberration which Augustine describes as existing among the Carthaginian colonists of Tyre.<sup>6</sup> A late tradition says that among the wives of Solomon was a daughter of Hiram, and it may have been in her honour that a spurious toleration was accorded to an unholy cult.<sup>7</sup> However that may be, Solomon

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 1, "Knowledge puffeth up."

<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr preserves a tradition ("Dial. c. Tryph." 34) that Solomon visited Sidon, and there for the sake of a wife, joined in idolatrous worship.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Deut. xi. 28 ; xiii. 2, &c.

<sup>5</sup> On this worship of the heavenly bodies compare Job xxxi. 26–28. Astarte was the Meleketh, the heavenly maiden or queen.

<sup>6</sup> Aug., "De Civ. Dei." ii. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Jer. vii. 18, xlv. 19 ; 1 Sam. xxxi. 10 ; 1 Kings xiv. 24 ; Hos. iv. 14, &c.



could never again utter the appeal of the more faithful Job—

“If I beheld the sun when it shined,  
Or the moon when walking in brightness,  
And my heart hath been secretly enticed,  
And my mouth hath kissed my hand, . . .  
I should have denied God that is above.”

If the worship of Ashtoreth was inevitably connected to a greater or less extent with impurity, that of “Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites” was deeply dyed with blood. Lust, as in all forms of Pagan idolatry, stood hard by hate. There can be little doubt that Milcom is but a diminutive and perhaps endearing form of Moloch, unless the termination be taken for a pronominal suffix, meaning, “their king.”<sup>1</sup> For it is clear that the Milcom of 1 Kings xi. 5, cannot be a different deity from the Molech of ver. 7, each of which idols is called “the abomination of the children of Ammon.”<sup>2</sup> He was—to quote once again the accurate description of our great poet, which is but a splendid reproduction in verse of the “De Dis Syriis” of his learned contemporary, Selden—

“Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood  
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears,  
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud  
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire  
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite  
Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain  
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream  
Of Utmost Arnon. Nor content with such  
Audacious neighbourhood the wisest heart  
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build  
His temple right against the temple of God,  
On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove  
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence  
And black Gehenna called, the type of hell.”

Almost all the ancient idolatries were various forms of sun and star worship. As Ashtoreth was the “Queen of Heaven,” and typified the soft splendours of the night, so Moloch is the King

<sup>1</sup> So Gesenius, s.v. He is called Malcham in Jer. xlix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Movers, however (“Phöniz.” i. 324), distinguishes between them, and Ewald with his usual positiveness says, “there is no doubt that Molech was different from Milcom.”



who represents the raging fierceness of the noon and of summer heat, the scorching and terrible Power whom it seemed natural to appease with blood.<sup>1</sup> If therefore Solomon permitted and joined in the worship of this frightful deity, we do not know in what it could have consisted except in those rites of which the Scriptures speak with the most deep abhorrence.<sup>2</sup>

3. The only other deity expressly mentioned as having been honoured by Solomon with a High Place was Chemosh, the abomination of Moab. To his worship the Moabites seem to have been so exclusively devoted, that they are called by Jeremiah, "the people of Chemosh."<sup>3</sup> It is an interesting confirmation of this fact that his name occurs frequently on the celebrated Moabite Stone, and since Carchemish means "the fort of Chemosh," his worship must have been widely spread among the Hittite tribes. He too, like Milcom, was a sun-god, and perhaps also a war-god, and was often propitiated with bloody rites. On the Moabite Stone those who have been slain in battle are spoken of as "an offering to Chemosh."<sup>4</sup> Milton identifies him with Baal Peor—

"Peor, his other name when he enticed  
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile  
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.  
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged  
Even to that hill of scandal by the grove  
Of Moloch homicide ; lust hard by hate  
Till good Josiah drove them thence to hell."<sup>5</sup>

This identification is, however, a mistake into which Milton was misled by Selden, as he in his turn had been misled by Jerome.<sup>6</sup>

The phrase, "and likewise did he for all his strange wives," might seem to imply that other deities also had altars raised

<sup>1</sup> Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 28 ; Jer. vii. 31 ; Zeph. i. 5 ; 2 Kings iii. 27 ;  
<sup>2</sup> Chron. xxviii. 3. In 2 Sam. xii. 31, "brick-kiln" should be rendered,  
"place of Moloch."

<sup>3</sup> See Lev. xx. 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. xlviii. 7 ; comp. Judg. xi. 24. Jerome says that the chief seat of his worship was Dibon. Eusebius says that the Greeks called him Ariel ("lion of God," "Onomast." s.v.). Chemosh means "conqueror."

<sup>5</sup> Gesenius, "Thes." 693, identifies him with Mars ; and Bezer (*ad* Selden p. 323) with the malign star Saturn (comp. 2 Kings iii. 26, 27).

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Comm. Isa. xiv. 2.



and incense burnt to them. If so, however, they are not named, and probably the main types of worship among the surrounding nations were represented by these most famous deities. The Hittites and the Edomites, from whom his other wives were taken, do not seem to have had any special and separate gods.

The shrines for these abominations of the heathen were not built in the Holy City itself. Probably even Solomon's daring cosmopolitanism would have shrunk from thus polluting the close proximity of the Temple. Nevertheless, they were placed in audacious neighbourhood to the Temple, which they actually confronted "on the hill that is *before* (*i.e.*, east of) Jerusalem." That hill can only mean the Mount of Olives. At the present day, "the hill of scandal," "the opprobrious hill" is identified with the *southern* crest of Olivet; but this must have been a modern specialization, for in the thirteenth century, according to Brocardus, the shrine of Moloch was believed to have been on this hill, and that of Chemosh on the southern elevation. The name itself "*mons offensionis*" is as old as the Vulgate.<sup>1</sup> The name given to it in the Book of Kings is "the Mount of corruption" or "destruction," and it is a strange and significant fact that these idolatrous shrines were not ravaged and defiled till the days of King Josiah.

To Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, through whom retribution came on Solomon's apostasy, is given the terrible recurrent epitaph that "he made Israel to sin." No such stigma is attached to the name of Solomon, and yet it is clear from the subsequent history that his example must have been very fatal in its effects. It familiarized his people with the names and the worship of deities to whose rites they were incessantly prone in later years. Even in the fourth year of Rehoboam, we are told that the high places (*bamoth*) or tapestried shrines of deities like these, became common, and that their pillars and phallic symbols were to be seen "on every high hill and under every green tree," and that their worship involved, and was invoked to sanction, the vilest moral abuses.<sup>2</sup> The warnings of the Mosaic books found a terrible fulfilment, and the ruin caused by Solomon's degeneracy far outweighed the brief advantage of his magnificence and wisdom.

2. But there was another canker at the root of Solomon's

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xiv. 22-24.



glory, and it brought about its own natural punishment. If his polygamy involved a physical decay and a spiritual decrepitude, his worldly ostentation demanded from his people sacrifices from which they reaped no satisfaction, and led to the imposition of burdens far heavier than they were willing to bear. The temples, cities, forts, and palaces with the construction of which he gratified his passion for building were rendered possible by the exaction of forced labour ; and the indolent luxury and gilded pomp of his Court could only be maintained by the imposition of taxes which fell with crushing weight on a pauperized people. Doubtless at first Solomon tried to procure the necessary labour from the sóccage—the “tribute of bond-service” imposed on the Helot population of the subjugated nationalities. Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, we are told, were driven to the menial labour, while for the freeborn Israelites were reserved the more honourable services of national defence.<sup>1</sup> Yet this statement stands side by side with the admission that Solomon raised a “tribute of men” out of all Israel to the number of thirty thousand.<sup>2</sup> On no previous occasion, since they left Egypt, had Israelites thus been compelled to do the work of a house of bondage, and then was fulfilled the warning of Samuel to them, when they felt so strong an infatuation for a monarchy, that their king “should take their men-servants and their maid-servants and their goodliest young men and put them to his work.”<sup>3</sup> These thirty thousand were one in forty-four of the able-bodied population. Ten thousand of them were always at work, and the grievance was bitterly felt.

At first, indeed, the people saw it under the glamour of a prosperity which satisfied their national pride, but it became less and less tolerable as the gleam of momentary splendour died away.

For besides this, there was a tribute in money as well as in men, and an Adoniram to enforce it. Solomon’s army had to be supplied, and his glittering bodyguard had to be equipped and paid. Such a Court as Solomon’s required (as we have seen) and wasted an immense daily provision. Whence could it all come, and how could all the seraglio be supported, and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xi. 20–22 ; comp. 1 Chron. xxii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings v. 13–18.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. viii. 15.



the attendants clothed and fed, except by resources drawn from the grudging and toiling multitude? Solomon so completely exhausted his treasury that he had been driven to the cession of a part of the sacred territory to Hiram, and if the cession was in itself humiliating, it was still more so in the circumstances by which it had been attended. No doubt every consideration of expediency would restrain Solomon from enforcing any compulsory tax as long as possible. Money payments have always been unpopular in Eastern countries, and up to this time they were unknown to the free Israelites. The tithe which he probably exacted would be disliked; though a tithe for royal purposes was scarcely an innovation, since the king claimed a sort of priestly character. But neither tithe, nor commerce, nor presents, nor foreign tolls, nor the proceeds of his own domain proved sufficient for the needs of so magnificent a spendthrift. We are not told that he established a poll-tax, but the complaints which found expression after his death are so strong that he may possibly have done so. The yoke of Solomon was declared to be very grievous, a "chastisement with whips," and old men must have rued the national folly which voluntarily abandoned a proud freedom for a dazzling absolutism. A deep and sullen discontent smouldered in the hearts of the people, and required but the least breath of wind to fan it into a flame.

Nor was Solomon left unwarned of the failure and catastrophe which was to darken the close of his career, and to fall with its full weight of calamity on the opening days of the reign of his only son. God, who had twice appeared in vision to bless his earlier efforts, and who had granted to him such exceptional gifts and opportunities, made known to him once more His purpose. Because Solomon had forsaken his God, God forsook him, and warned him that his son should only be heir to the fragment of a denationalized and divided kingdom. But though the full measure of punishment was postponed, Solomon was not suffered to go personally unpunished, and the form in which the Divine displeasure was manifested must have been peculiarly galling to one who had revelled so long in the plenitude of successful power. His commerce nullified, his fame tarnished, his dominion reduced to comparative insignificance, Solomon became the prey of adversaries whom he would utterly have disdained in the dawn of his power, yet whom he could neither control nor punish in these paler and less crowned years.



We are told nothing of his personal feelings, but so wise and so gifted a king could not have blinded himself to the consequences of the false development of his ambition and worldliness. When kings set an unworthy and enervating example, their people follow it. The polygamy, the religious indifference, the haughty exclusiveness which now marked the Court would certainly be imitated in the houses of princes and nobles. The Book of Proverbs gives us unexpected and painful glimpses into a deeply seated corruption. From it we learn that violence, impurity, and commercial dishonesty had assumed great proportions in the cities of Judah, and that the influx of foreign merchants and colonists had brought in their train "strange women" who lured to their destruction the souls of the "simple" and God-forgetting youth.

Not such were the sons whom an early and perhaps Solomonian poet<sup>1</sup> had described as growing up like tender plants, nor the daughters which were as the polished corners of the Temple; not such the simple agricultural prosperity of those who were delivered from "strange children": not such the happiness of the people who have the Lord for their God!

A single and incidental notice will enable us to measure the width of the moral chasm which separated the days of David from those of Solomon. When Solomon was dead and the Ten Tribes were on the verge of open revolt, the old men who had been contemporary with Solomon's earliest days gave Rehoboam wise advice, which, had he followed it, would have prevented the disruption of his kingdom. But when he consulted the true children of the reign and those who exhibited its gradual degeneracy—"the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him"—their advice was so insolently foolish, so senselessly irritating, so utterly devoid of every element of policy and justice, that it enables us to see the haughty spirit of oppression which had been fostered by a semi-Egyptian sovereignty. Such feather-pated youths as these could never have existed in the simpler courts of Solomon's predecessors. They show us the giddy intoxication, the dementation preceding doom, which is bred in the votaries of tyrants who, knowing nothing of the hearts of their people, are absorbed in their own pleasures, and blinded by their habitual pride. Luxury, in

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxliv. 12-15.



dolence, effeminacy, had done their work in the hearts of the sons and daughters of Judah. Their land was full of silver and gold and there was no end of their treasures ; their land was full of horses, and there was no end to their chariots. Their land also was full of idols.

Yet we hear of no single word of priestly protest. The Priesthood seems to have sunk into the torpor of ceremonialism under the patronizing dominance of the king. Doubtless they burned with perfect precision "the two kidneys and the fat," and went through the whole round of rites which belonged to all that was then known of the Levitic ordinances. But they seem to have been content with this strenuous idleness of perpetual functions which they mistook for work. There is not the faintest sign that they exercised, or tried to exercise, any sort of moral or spiritual influence, or even that they offered so much as a barren protest when they saw the counter-smoke of incense rising from idolatrous altars on the opprobrious hill. Nothing could have stemmed the rolling tide of national corruption but the bold and independent voice of prophecy. Prophets had risen before at the crisis of agony and punishment and in the face of flagrant crimes or monstrous abuses ; but for long years no prophet seems to have felt the descending flame of inspiration amid this many-coloured gorgeousness and slow autumnal decay of the truest principles of an entrusted religion. Nathan died, and Gad died, and for a long period there was no prophet more. Every free power was overshadowed by the upas-blight of an irresponsible despotism ; every free voice hushed by the unquestioning decision of an oracular royalty. There seems to have been an attempt to persuade the people that there was always and literally "a Divine sentence on the lips of kings,"<sup>1</sup> and that nothing was required to supplement so infallible a wisdom. It was not till after Solomon had been long upon the throne that a new race of prophets sprang up, and of these the most prominent—Ahijah of Shiloh and Shemaiah—looked with strong displeasure on the change which the king had brought over the spirit of the nation. They did not like to see a native Pharaoh transforming the Promised Land into a new fiery furnace, and looking with equal eyes on the shrines of Moloch and the Temple of the Lord. They looked on such toleration

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xvi. 10.



as little better than apostasy. Even true toleration was not possible till hundreds of years later, but this was a toleration entirely unwarrantable, for it involved the recognition of deities whose worship was in its very essence cruel and impure.

The adversaries of Solomon are mentioned together in the Book of Kings.<sup>1</sup> Of Hadad and Rezon I have already spoken, and although in the earlier years of his reign Solomon was able to hold them in check, they probably became more troublesome and dangerous as time went on. It was not however from these foreign enemies that the chief danger rose. It rose from a man perfectly insignificant but for the notice and promotion which he had received from Solomon himself. This was Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The name of this youth—like that of the king's son Rehoboam—points to the fact that he had been born in the early golden days of prosperity during which the nation took pride in its extension and its increasing multitudes. Jeroboam, like the Greek Polydemus, implies the numbers, and Rehoboam, like Eurydemos, the enlargement of the people.<sup>2</sup>

His position was isolated, his origin obscure. Widows in the East are a peculiarly downtrodden and unprotected class, and Jeroboam was the son of a widow of the obscure town of Zeredah—probably Zarthan in the valley of the Jordan.<sup>3</sup> The vicinity of Zarthan to the clay ground in which the bronze vessels of the Temple were cast by Hiram may have brought him into connection with the vast throngs of Solomon's workmen. His own vigour and activity did the rest. He was evidently a man of great shrewdness and fine presence, and Solomon, who—though his Court abounded in drones and parasites—could recognize *a man* when he saw him—had cast a favourable eye on his industry when he was building the earthwork of Millo, and repairing the breaches in the City of David. Jeroboam belonged to the tribe of Ephraim,<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xi. 14-25.

<sup>2</sup> Others make Jeroboam mean "the kinsman (*i.e.*, God) contendeth; and Rehoboam "the kinsman (*i.e.*, God) enlargeth."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings vii. 46; 2 Chron. iv. 17, Zeredathah.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings xi. 26, "an Ephraimite," Revised Version. In the Authorized Version the word is incorrectly rendered "an *Ephrathite*" which would mean an inhabitant of Ephratah or Bethlehem. There is the same mistake in 1 Sam. i. 1.



Solomon promoted him while still young to be the chief superintendent of the "burden"—that is, of the bands of forced labourers—hired from the districts of Ephraim and Manasseh. The position was not only invidious, but dangerous, and nothing shows more clearly the tact and suppleness of Jeroboam's character than the fact that he so used his opportunities as to satisfy his superiors without alienating the admiration of his fellow-tribesmen. When Adoniram was stoned, Jeroboam was made king. But his work as overseer revealed to him a state of things which perhaps was unsuspected by Solomon. He learnt that the recent exactions had, on the one hand, created a widespread disaffection to the house of David, which now began to appear as a naked tyranny shorn of its brief and delusive magnificence; and that, on the other hand, the jealousy of the northern tribes in particular had been rekindled by the burdens laid on them for the advantage of an alien king, and the embellishment of a distant capital. How early the seeds of ambition were sown in his mind we do not know. If we are to attach any historical importance to the circumstantial additions interpolated into his history by the Greek translators we must believe that he fortified a city and called it by the name of his mother, Sarira, who is described as a harlot;<sup>1</sup> that becoming rich he not only emulated, but outdid the example of Absalom, by providing himself with three hundred chariots; and that his interview with Ahijah did not take place till his return from Egypt. Although the order of events in the Hebrew narrative is not necessarily chronological, it leads us to a different view. We should judge from it that Ahijah the Shilonite, as well as Solomon, had cast his eye on this brave and intelligent youth, and seen in him the predestined agent of a great revolution. As a Shilonite, and therefore a member of the northern kingdom, and one who perhaps mourned over the ruin and desertion of his native Shiloh,<sup>2</sup> which had sunk into total insignificance amid the rising glories of the Temple, and of Jerusalem, he would be likely to resent the wrongs of his people, and to be chosen by God as the interpreter of the feelings which were to work out the designs of Providence. The intervention of a Prophet was

<sup>1</sup> From the LXX. (Vatican) reading of 1 Kings xiv. 17 it seems as if they identified Sarira with Tirzah, the capital of the northern kings till Omri's



needed, since no whisper of reproof or of contradiction rose from the subservient priests, who, absorbed in their functions and ceremonies, rendered no service either to freedom or to spiritual religion. It has been supposed that he spoke first to Solomon, but if he did so, no record of the fact is preserved in the sacred narrative, nor do we infer from anything which we know of Solomon that it would have been possible or useful for a Prophet to penetrate the circle of pomp by which he was surrounded. The courage would not have been wanting, for long afterwards, when he was old and sick and blind, Ahijah fearlessly uttered to the wife of Jeroboam the fearful doom of extirpation which was to fall upon the usurper's race. But God made known to Solomon His own displeasure without the need of prophetic intervention, and it was Ahijah's task to stir up this appointed instrument. It would have been dangerous, perhaps fatal, to them both if he had delivered the Divine message at Jerusalem. But on a stated occasion, when Jeroboam had left the holy city, Ahijah withdrew him from the main road into the open country. The prophet was clad in a new robe, and emphasizing his message by one of those symbols which are more effective than any speech, he seized the new robe from his own shoulders and rent it into twelve pieces.<sup>1</sup> Ten of these pieces he ordered Jeroboam to take, and told him that thus should God rend ten tribes from the apostate house of David, and would give them to him. One tribe—two tribes in reality, which from their close connexion were practically regarded as one—would God leave to the son of Solomon, nor should the disruption take place till Solomon was dead, because of God's promise to David and His choice of Jerusalem; for these reasons God would not take aught of the kingdom (so the verse should be rendered) out of the hands of Solomon himself.<sup>2</sup> A warning followed, that as the house of David had been afflicted because of its sins, so the prosperity of Jeroboam should be conditional on his faithfulness.

<sup>1</sup> In the apocryphal additions to the Septuagint the rôle of Ahijah of Shiloh is transferred (after the death of Solomon) to Shemaiah "the Enlomite," who is bidden to take to himself "a new garment which has never been in water." The passage is often understood as though Ahijah rent the new robe of Jeroboam; but the meaning is (as in our Revised Version) that "*Ahijah* had clad himself in a new robe." For the symbol itself compare Saul rending Samuel's robe (1 Sam xv 27, 28).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xi. 34.



Perhaps the prophet's words did but give embodiment to the young man's dreams. What he said, how he acted, we do not know. Apparently he was too impatient to wait for his master's death, and had to be taught by failure that the accomplishment of the prophecy rested in higher hands than his. In some way or other "he lifted up his hand against the king." Probably Jeroboam had not concealed from friends and partisans among his fellow Ephraimites the prophecy of Ahijah, and so he was hurried into premature rebellion. His plot came to the king's knowledge, and he sent to arrest the traitor. But Jeroboam at the first sign of danger fled into Egypt. Egypt had proved to Solomon as it proved to so many Jewish kings, a very broken reed on which to lean. The Pharaoh, who had helped Solomon, and given him his daughter in marriage, had been superseded by Shishak I., the Sheshonk of the monuments, and the Sesonchosis of Manetho, the first king of the twenty-second dynasty, and the first Pharaoh mentioned in Scripture who is referred to by his own name, and can be certainly identified. He seized the throne of Egypt, and founded the Bubastite dynasty about B.C. 960. In the Book of Kings Shishak is not called Pharaoh (1 Kings xi. 40), but Melek Mizraim. He is the king who, twenty years later, in the reign of Rehoboam, entered Jerusalem and stripped the Temple and Palace of their treasures.<sup>1</sup> The identity of this king with the protector of Jeroboam is confirmed by the Egyptian monuments, for in the great inscription on the south wall of a temple at Carnak he is represented as brandishing his victorious weapon over one hundred and thirty-three conquered enemies, and dragging to the feet of the Theban trinity the heads of thirty conquered nations, of which Judah was one.<sup>2</sup> To the protection of this king Jeroboam fled. Shishak had not the same need as his predecessors for neighbouring alliances, and the affinity of the Tanite king with Solomon would alone be sufficient to make Shishak welcome a rival to the house of David. Whether he imitated the conduct of the earlier Pharaoh

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xii. 9; see Duncker, iii. 54. Osorkon is by some identified with the king whom Asa defeated in 918 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> Champollion's reading of "Judaha Melek" (king or kingdom of Judah) over one of the bearded figures is however very doubtful. See Duncker, ii. 233. Only one hundred of the one hundred and thirty-three shields are legible, and on these the name of Jerusalem is not found, though some have believed that they identify Ajalon, Beth-Horon, Gibeon, Rimmon, &c.



towards Hadad or not depends on the testimony of the Septuagint alone. There, among other suspicious circumstances, we are told that he loved and honoured Jeroboam so greatly as to give him in marriage Ano, the sister of his wife Thekemina,<sup>1</sup> who is represented as having been the mother of Abijah. However that may be, Jeroboam seems to have remained in Egypt, secure in the patronage of Pharaoh, and probably in communication with the party of discontent, till the death of Solomon enabled him to return safely to Ephraim by the invitation of his countrymen, and to head the revolt which established for 256 years the separate kingdom of Israel.

“The Israelite kingdom, reared into greatness by Solomon,” says the modern Jewish historian, “was like a world of magic upbuilt by powerful genii. The magic vanished with his death. He did not bequeath to his son his magic ring.”<sup>2</sup>

There remain no further events or deeds to relate in the reign of Solomon, for nothing further is recorded in Scripture respecting him. He reigned forty years, not eighty, as Josephus incorrectly says.<sup>3</sup> He could not therefore have greatly exceeded the age of sixty, and his old age was premature. There is nothing incredible in the fact that Saul and David as well as Solomon reigned forty years. The number may not be rigidly exact, and, even if it were, the coincidence is easily paralleled. It has been pointed out that three consecutive kings of Babylon each reigned twenty-one years, and Claudius and his successor, Nero, each reigned fourteen years.<sup>4</sup> The story of his reign ends with the formal conclusion that “Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father ; and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.”

It is very difficult to estimate the real character of Solomon, because we have little recorded for us beyond outward facts. Of the writings which pass under his name two are now declared by the all but unanimous voice of modern criticism to belong to a later age. We may, however, glance backwards for a moment at the lesson of the records which have come down to us. His

<sup>1</sup> The name Ano has no Egyptian affinities ; nothing is known either of her or of the Tahpenes mentioned in 1 Kings xi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Grätz, i. 366.

<sup>3</sup> “Antiq. Jud.” viii. 7, § 6. Perhaps Josephus read  $\pi$  for  $\mu$  in his Greek version, and hence makes him mount the throne at 14, and die at 94.

<sup>4</sup> “Speaker’s Commentary” on 1 Kings xi. 42.



life, then, so far as its chief characteristics are preserved, falls into three divisions.

i. In the first, which goes down to the commencement of his reign, he is still, in the fullest sense, Jedidiah, the beloved of the Lord, and worthy of his twofold destiny as monarch and builder of the Temple. God seems to have showered upon him every gift—princely beauty, quick intelligence, lofty aims, an understanding heart ; to which He added the wisdom for government which the young king desired. When in the midst of the rejoicing multitude “Zadok the priest and Nathan the seer anointed Solomon king,” the scene seemed to the spectators as rich in hope as when in our own country Archbishop Cranmer and the Lord Protector Somerset placed the crown of England—perhaps at much the same age—on the youthful brows of Edward the Sixth ; and in his coronation sermon the prelate urged the boy-king “to reward virtue, to revenge sin, to justify the innocent, to relieve the poor, to procure peace, and to execute justice throughout his realms.” Edward perhaps was *felix opportunitate mortis*, but Solomon lived to disappoint bitterly the hopes of his people.

ii. In the second stage of his history we see him in all his glory. We hear how he built the Temple, fragrant with precious woods, glittering with precious metals and precious stones ; how he reared city after city, and palace after palace, each more splendid than the last ; how the cedars crashed down for him on Lebanon, and the fleets brought treasures, things strange and beautiful, from Tarshish and Ophir ; how he hung his porticoes with golden shields ; how his revenues were replenished with all manner of stores ; how he sat on his lion-guarded throne of gold and ivory—

“ That far outshone the wealth  
Of Ormuz or of Ind, or where the East  
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold ;”

how the Queen of Sheba came from the far East to visit him with her spices and her camels, and she grew faint of heart as she witnessed his magnificence.

But we feel, even while we read the story, that all this has but little real significance for humanity. Men care more for one golden deed, for one inspiring thought, than for—

“ The retinue long of horses led,  
And grooms besmeared with gold ;”



more for the lonely student who in his garret has deciphered but one law of nature, or for the poet who has enriched the blood of the world with one sweet song, than for any number of jewelled sultans.

iii. And in the third stage of the history the glory vanishes. There is sudden disenchantment. The gold has become dross, the wine mixed with water. The good which Solomon had done remains, but all that was selfish and personal in his aggrandizement has dwindled into nothing. His ostentatious commerce has proved an expensive failure ; his political alliances a hollow truce ; his sinful luxury has but filmed a deep and sullen discontent. His shameful Harem has given him neither a real home nor a true love. His foreign mercenaries shut him out from his people's love. His forced labour caused misery and disorder. He leaves behind him but one weak and worthless son to dismember his kingdom and disgrace his name. The consecrator of the Temple has become a shameless polytheist ; the splendid youth a weary old man ; the well-beloved prince a tyrant, scourging with whips an impatient people. The "Peaceful" is harassed by the petty raids of ignoble foes ; the "Magnificent" is laden with debts ; the "Darling of the Lord" has built shrines for Moloch and Astarte. Hiram of Tyre has turned in disgust from an ungenerous recompence ; a new Pharaoh of Egypt gives shelter to his revolted servant. In another and direr sense than after the vision which followed the thanksgiving for his coronation, "And Solomon awoke and behold it was a dream."<sup>1</sup>

Even if the Book of Ecclesiastes rests on no traditional data, there is deep moral truth in its conception of the miserable and cynical mood of sceptical despair which springs from sumptuous despotism and selfish luxury. Solomon had lost the clue to the meaning of life. His soul was sullied, his faith dimmed, his fervour cold. Every trace of happiness and satisfaction had vanished from his life. All is emptiness. David was surrounded by warriors and prophets and great men ; but Solomon stood horribly alone, and in the dazzling glare of his tyranny there seemed no room for any other eminence, whether of goodness or of wisdom, in the flatterers who stood around his throne. His children seem to have been nothing to him, and we do not even know whether

<sup>1</sup> These three stages of Solomon's career are well marked in the famous passage of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xlvii. 12-21).



they were many or few. His son does not emerge from the shadow till the age (if the reading be correct) of forty-two, and even at that mature period of life showed himself foolish and headstrong. How little could the gewgaws of gilded palace and brodered robe and ivory throne give a moment's peace to a man for whom everything had turned into dust and ashes like fairy gold ! He might have said with Hyperion—

“ O dreams of day and night  
O spectres, busy in a cold cold gloom ! . . .  
E'en here unto my centre of repose  
The shady visions come to domineer  
Insult and blind and stifle up my pomp ! ”

“ At first, before he married strange wives,” says the Talmud, “ Solomon reigned over the angels—he sat on “the throne of the Lord” (1 Chron. xxix. 23) ; then only over those below—“over all the kingdoms” (1 Kings iv. 21) ; then only over Israel (Eccles. i. 12) ; then only over Jerusalem—“the words of the Preacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem” (Eccles. i. 1). At last he reigned *only over his stick*—as it is said, “And *this* was my portion of my labour.”<sup>1</sup> For by the word “*this*” he meant, said Rav, the staff which was in his hand, and which was the only possession left to him.

The Arabian legend is right which says that in the staff on which he leaned was a worm secretly gnawing upon its centre.<sup>2</sup> It was the worm of pride, of sensuality, of selfishness. And there is a touch of insight, too, in the other legend of his death—how he entered the Temple robed and crowned, and stood between the pillars—

“ Leaning upon his ebony staff,  
Sealed with the sign of Pentagraph ”—

and as he stood there in silence, like a painted king, with his long snowy hair and beard streaming over his robe of Tyrian purple,

“ And his face to the Oracle, where the hymn  
Died under the wings of the Cherubim,”

suddenly the hand of God beckoned to him, and he died. But though he was dead, yet, because of the Pentacle on his

<sup>1</sup> Sanhedrin, f. 20. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Hottinger, “Hist. Orient.” p. 66, ed. 1651.



staff and ring, none ventured to approach ; and he stood there with the death-stare in his cold eyes, and priests and worshippers streamed to and fro, but awed by his face and fame as he stood there dead and magnificent, they dared not touch him, until, at last, a little brown mouse ran out of a pillar and nibbled the leather at the bottom of his staff, and flat on his face fell the dead king in the dust, and out of the dust they picked a golden crown.<sup>1</sup> Dust and ashes—there ended all his glory. “I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem”—and then like a death knell which shivers through the sere leaves of a churchyard in autumn—the repeated burden, “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher ; all is vanity !”

There is a significant silence about him in the sacred records. Except in the one reference by our Lord to his glory, which was yet surpassed by the lilies of the field, there is scarcely a single allusion to him either in the long centuries of history, or in the Poets and Prophets of Israel, or by the Apostles and Evangelists of Christ. Saul with his early meekness and magnanimity, and his troubled soul, and his tragic end—David in his heroism and his fall and his penitence—are far more interesting and significant figures for mankind than the brilliant builder and trafficker, who grew into an uxorious, a ruined, and an apostate autocrat. The story of Solomon is the story of one whose heart was perverted and his will enervated by luxury and pride.

The life of David was like an April morning ; it is thoroughly human in its interests, in its struggles and sins. If the clouds at times gathered very darkly over it, it constantly shows “the clear shining after rain.” His adventures when he was hunted like a gazelle upon the mountains, his genial humour, the yearnings of his spiritual emotion, the passionate depths of his repentance, his chivalry, his crimes, his misfortunes, his contrition, his recovery, after so deep a fall, of the clean heart and the free spirit, make him stand out vividly distinct from the

<sup>1</sup> The legend is given in Qur’ân (xxxiv. 10, Chapter of Sebâ, Palmer’s translation, p. 151), where, however, “the reptile of the earth,” which gnaws the staff is a worm. Solomon, foreseeing that he would die before the Temple was completed, had prayed that his death might not be discovered till the demons had finished the tasks he had set them. “And when he fell down it was made manifest to the jinns that, had they but known the unseen, they need not have tarried in their shameful torment.”



sacred page, and give to his life a deeply instructive meaning for all time. He moves as a man among men with kindly heart even after the boy-shepherd has grown into the victorious king ; and the events of his life are mingled up with those of his many followers and friends. But Solomon stands alone in his cold intellectuality and imposing pomp—like a painted tyrant—or the figure of an idol in a gilded pageant—a king on whom we gaze as on a spectacle, but whom it is impossible to love.

In his great picture in the Campo Santo at Florence, Orcagna represents Solomon rising slowly and painfully out of his sepulchre at the archangel's trumpet, ignorant whether to turn to the right or to the left, uncertain whether his place is to be among the saved or among the lost. Was his lot to be with Jerusalem or the hill of scandal?—Is he to count as a servant of the Lord Jehovah or a votary of Moloch fires and Ashtaroth abominations? Supposing that he wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes some have seen in it the gracious gleam of a late recovery from his fall, and have believed that he, too, at least “by one poor tear” of repentance won a pardoning grace. But he could not have been the author of that book, nor does it contain any expression either of shame or of penitence. But discussions about the salvation of this or that man are futile. God, not man, is the judge. It is strange that the Church writers who have passed the judgment of hopeless damnation on no soul but that of Judas, should only have doubted in two individual instances about a final salvation. Those two are the cases of Origen and of Solomon.<sup>1</sup> If any Church writers could express open doubts of the fate of Origen, a confessor, a martyr, a great teacher, from boyhood upwards, an incomparable saint of God, we need not attach much weight to the fact that some have also doubted the fate of Solomon.<sup>2</sup> The work may have been burned yet the workman saved. If in Vathek he is doomed to sit in the halls of Eblis, and as he groans and raises his arm towards heaven, the Kaliph “discerns through his bosom, which was transparent as crystal, his heart enveloped in flame ;” on the other hand, the great poet of the Divine Comedy was no lenient judge, and he places the soul of Solomon in Paradise among

<sup>1</sup> I find a discussion “*De Salomonis damnatione*” among the works of Philippus, Abbas Bonæ Spei, 1651.

<sup>2</sup> Pfeiffer, “*Dubia Vexata*,” p. 435 ; Buddeus, “*Hist. Eccl.*” ii. 273.



the souls of the greatest teachers. Alluding to the Canticles, Dante sings in the "Paradiso"—

"The fifth light,  
Goodliest of all, is by such love inspired  
That all your world craves tidings of his doom :  
Within, there is the lordly light, endowed  
With sapience so profound, if truth be truth,  
That with a ken of such wide amplitude  
No second has arisen." <sup>1</sup>

And, again—

"He was a king who asked  
For wisdom to the end he might be king  
Sufficient." <sup>2</sup>

If his glory "involved the germ of a continuous decay," he yet achieved a great work. He raised Israel for a time to the height of its national aspirations, and showed the possibilities of splendour and authority which it might attain. He stirred the intellectual life of the Hebrews in new directions. He quickened their sense of a national position while, at the same time, he rendered them less narrow in their sympathies. He organized the services of the Levites, and placed their position on a secure basis. He enshrined their worship in a worthy and permanent Temple. He drew the priesthood from obscure and dubious local shrines to one recognized service.<sup>3</sup> In his earlier years of power he showed the ideal of a king ruling wisely and firmly in the fear of God. He left his people stronger and

"La quinta luce ch' è tra noi' più bella,  
Spira di tale amor, che tutto il mondo  
Laggiù ne gola di saper novella.  
Entro v' è l' alta mente, u' si profondo  
Saver fu messo, che si il vero è vero,  
A veder tanto non surse il secondo."

DANTE, "Paradiso," x. 109-114.

"Ch'ei fu Rè, che chiese senno  
Acciocchè Rè sufficiente fosse."

*Ibid.*, "Paradiso," xiii. 95.

<sup>3</sup> The priests partly lived on the sacrifices, and therefore would be naturally drawn to the Temple. The Book of Chronicles, which throughout makes David the originator and Solomon the executor, says that the organization of the priesthood was part of David's last commands (1 Chron xxiv.).



richer in the possession of a well-fortified city ; and he protected their land by towers and fortresses. If by his sins he personally forfeited the promise of a long life, and of an undivided kingdom—if his more selfish exactions ended in the deep disaster of a national disruption,<sup>1</sup> yet he had raised his people in the scale of nations, had fixed the form of some of their most necessary institutions, and had “awakened among them a strong desire for deeper wisdom and higher art, which, during the stormier ages which followed, never wholly died away, and in some directions constantly developed itself with more and more power and beauty.”<sup>2</sup> Had he done no other service beyond the building of the Temple, he would still have influenced the religious life of his people down to its latest days. It was to them a perpetual reminder and visible symbol of God’s presence and protection, a strong bulwark of all the sacred traditions of their law, a witness to duty, an impulse to historic study, an inspiration of sacred song.

His name has been bestowed upon hundreds of powerful Eastern monarchs among whose people lingered the traditions of his prosperity and magnificence. But it is a name to point a moral even more than to adorn a tale. He fulfilled all, even the darkest, of the prognostications with which the great Samuel had vainly tried to warn a free nation when they hankered after a king. He took their sons for his chariots and horses and to be his runners ; he made them toil to minister to the luxury of his effeminate and overgrown household ; he took toll of their fields and vineyards ; he subjected them to enforced labours ; he chastised them with whips under his heavy yoke ; and, after all, he did not go out before them to fight their battles.<sup>3</sup> He had given them some intellectual impulse, he had left them some material advantages, but his work was far less significant, his glory less real, his annals less interesting than the tarnished work and glory and annals of his more heroic, and more human father. He changed the true Israel into a feeble simulacrum of Egypt—a pale reflex of Phœnicia. He stands out to kings as a conspicuous warning against the way in which they should not walk. He found a people free, he left them enslaved ; he found them unburdened, he left them

<sup>1</sup> Hos. iii. 4 ; Isa. vii. 17 ; Zech. xi. 7-14.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald, iii. 317.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. viii. 11-22.



oppressed ; he found them simple, he left them luxurious ; he found them inclined to be faithful to one God, he left them indifferent to the abominations of heathendom which they saw practised under the very shadow of his palace and his shrine ; he found them occupying a unique position as providential witnesses to one saving truth, he left them a nation like other nations, only weaker in power and exhausted in resources.

“ 'Tis but the moral of all human tales ;  
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past :  
First freedom and then glory ; when that fails,  
Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at last.”

Not Solomon, not even one of Solomon's descendants, but ANOTHER of the line of his brother Nathan “was the true Shelomoh, the Prince of Peace, the true Jedid-jah, the Beloved of the Father.”



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, AND BOOKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM.

Character of Solomon's wisdom—1. His interest in natural science—Admiration—Similitudes—Legendary magical powers—Importation of new forms of animal and vegetable life—2. Solomon as a poet—The One Hundred and Twenty-seventh Psalm—The Seventy-second Psalm—Changed intellectual tendency of his age—3. The Canticles—Date of the Book—Probably written by a Northern Israelite—Some characteristics of the book—Its allusions to an age of luxury—Its allusions to nature—Difference of its tone from that of the Nature-Psalms—Not on the surface a religious poem—Supposed outline of the poem as an idyl of consecrated love—This view adopted by most modern critics—The poem allegorized by Rabbis, Fathers, and Schoolmen—Real subject of it—Specimens of the allegoric interpretation—Not an epithalamium—Difficulties of believing it to be intentionally allegoric—The allegoric application religiously tenable, though not to be regarded as primary—The sanctification of love—Human love as a symbol of Divine.

IN a brief passage of the Book of Kings we are told that "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore."<sup>1</sup> By this "largeness of heart" is meant what we should call a fine and varied intelligence."<sup>2</sup> His fame was spread through all nations, and from all people and all kings of the earth men came "to hear the wisdom of Solomon." The quick judgment which decided difficult cases, the capacity for government, the patronage of architecture, the readiness to admire the commerce, art, and science of the surrounding nations, and the skill

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings iv. 29-34.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclus. i. 19, "She pours forth skill and practical knowledge."



in organization which the king displayed, are all meant to be illustrations of this wisdom. But three more special illustrations are furnished—namely, that he spake of trees from the cedar to the hyssop, and of beasts, and birds, and insects, and fishes; that he spake three thousand “proverbs;” and that “his songs were a thousand and five.”

Let us speak first of his interest in all branches of natural history.

There is no trace of any scientific knowledge in those reputed writings of Solomon which are canonical, but such knowledge was traditionally ascribed to him. All that we see in the Solomonic writings of Scripture is some interest in natural phenomena, and a poetic admiration for the beauty of the outer world. Few passages of description, for instance, are more beautiful than those in Canticles which show a delighted appreciation of the flowers and the green fields and budding trees. In the Book of Wisdom we find the first—or almost the first—traces in Semitic literature of the remarkable argument, so common in later literature, that “by the greatness and beauty of things created the Maker of them is relatively seen.”<sup>1</sup> Although the name of God scarcely occurs in the Song of Songs, we find in it a loving sense of “the beauty and the wonder and the power” of the works of God. Take, for instance, the famous description of spring—

“My beloved spake, and said unto me,  
 ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
 For, lo, the winter is past,  
 The rain is over and gone;  
 The flowers appear on the earth;  
 The time of the singing of birds is come;  
 And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.  
 The fig-tree ripeneth her green figs,  
 And the vines are in blossom,  
 They give forth their fragrance.  
 Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.’”

If “in wonder all philosophy began, and in wonder it ends, and admiration fills up the interspace,” then in the loving enjoyment of nature we see the first step to its scientific study, and to “the climbing by these sunbeams to the Father of Lights.” Iris, in the Greek legend, is the daughter of Thaumás; in other

<sup>1</sup> Wisd. xiii. 5.



words, through the child of astonishment came the messages of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Josephus explains this "speaking of trees," and of all kinds of beasts, fowls, and fishes, which is attributed to Solomon, as though it meant "he spake *a parable* upon every sort of tree,"<sup>2</sup> and in like manner also about all sorts of living creatures." In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes there are references to trees and plants, but not in the way of drawing moral emblems from them. Such parables, in the form of practical instruction, are drawn from the ants, the locusts, the goats, the coneys, the lizards, the growth of weeds; and there are allusions to the habits of lions, bears, eagles, greyhounds, and serpents.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps in these we may see the earliest gleams of the more accurate and systematic knowledge of later times. If, as Josephus adds, Solomon "was not unacquainted with any of these creatures, nor omitted inquiries about them, but described them all like a philosopher, and demonstrated his exquisite knowledge of their several properties,"<sup>4</sup> the works in which such knowledge was enshrined exist no longer. There is not the least trace of that encyclopædic acquaintance with cosmogony, physiology, hydrography, astronomy, botany, medicine, and philosophy which is traditionally ascribed to Solomon by the Alexandrian author of the Book of Wisdom.<sup>5</sup>

Nor again is there so much as a hint in Scripture of the magic powers in which, according to Arabian legends, the great king was wont to revel. Not a word is said about his ring, or seal, or knowledge of the incommunicable name, or golden table, or power of understanding the language of birds or beasts. Josephus believed that "he had composed incantations by which distempers are alleviated, and left behind him the manner of using exorcisms by which demons are driven away so that they never return." He relates how in his own presence and in that of the Emperor Vespasian and his staff, a Jew named Eleazar, by means of a ring and a root mentioned by

<sup>1</sup> Arist., "Metaph." i. 2, διὰ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν. Plat., "Theæt." § 32, ἔοικεν ὁ τὴν Ἰριὸν θαύμαντος ἔκγονον φήσας οὐ κακῶς γενεαλογεῖν.

<sup>2</sup> There are "parables" and comparisons from trees and plants in Judg. ix. 14; 2 Kings xiv. 9; Ezek. xxxi. 3; Amos ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. vi. 6, xxiv. 30-34, xxx. 15, 19, 24-31.

<sup>4</sup> "Antiq." viii. 2, § 6.

<sup>5</sup> Wisd. vii. 17-21.



Solomon, drew out a demon from the nostrils of one possessed; and, still using the name of Solomon, compelled the demon, in high that he had departed, to upset a basin full of water, by which "the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly." Eleazar was doubtless one of the wandering exorcists of the same class as "the seven sons of one Sceva a Jew," and we need inquire no further into the question as to whether he was a fanatic, or an impostor, or a mixture of both.

Yet we have one most interesting proof of that inquiring spirit in which Solomon resembled Alexander the Great. If Alexander was always eager to furnish information, and to send specimens of natural history to Aristotle, so Solomon first familiarized his people with apes, and peacocks, and sandal wood, and other strange, beautiful, or precious productions of foreign lands. Tradition further tells us that to him was due the naturalization of the balsam-tree, which added a new article of commerce to the revenues of Palestine, and was a source of great wealth even ten centuries later. According to Josephus the balsam was first introduced by the Queen of Sheba. It was acclimatized in gardens at Jericho, and was very precious. It early became an article of export and a medicinal drug.<sup>1</sup> From the fragrant gum, which distilled from incisions made in the stem with sharp stones, a valuable unguent was made which cured wounds.<sup>2</sup> Pliny mentions it as peculiar to Palestine,<sup>3</sup> and specimens of it were carried among the spoils of Titus in his triumph after the fall of Jerusalem.

2. Of Solomon as a poet we are told that his songs were a thousand and five, or, according to Josephus, five thousand. Of these no certain specimen remains to us. Of Canticles we will speak immediately, but may say at once that although it is probably of ancient date there is not the least proof that the king wrote it. The so-called "Psalter of Solomon" consisting of eighteen Psalms is undoubtedly of late and even of Maccabean origin. It is a valueless cento of phrases, though it has

<sup>1</sup> "Balm of Gilead," Jer. viii. 22, xlv. 11; Ezek. xxvii. 17 (marg., *rosin*). But the assertion of Josephus is doubtful, for "balm" was sent by Jacob to Egypt (Gen. xliii. 11). The *opobalsamum* is still called in Arabic *dseri* (Heb. *tzeri*).

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 6, § 6; xiv. 4, § 1; xv. 4, § 2.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, "H. N." xii. 54; xiii. 9.



had the honour to find its way into one of the oldest and most valuable uncial manuscripts of the New Testament—the great Codex Alexandrinus. In the Book of Psalms, two—the Seventy-second and the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh—are, in the traditional titles, ascribed to Solomon.<sup>1</sup> The Seventy-second is that splendid Psalm—“Give the king thy judgments, oh Lord”—which describes a righteous king ruling from sea to sea in untroubled prosperity. If it were either by Solomon himself or due to the impulse he gave, as seems very probable, it shows that though poetry may have lost something of the passionate spontaneity which it displayed in the heart of David, it was still capable of the noblest utterances. Psalm cxxvii.—“Except the Lord build the house”—is one of the “Songs of Degrees,” or as we should call them, “Pilgrim Songs”—songs of the goings up—which were perhaps sung by the caravans of pilgrims on their visits to Jerusalem at the yearly feasts. It is an exquisite picture of domestic life in the days when marriage was deemed a blessing left us from the ruins of Paradise, and the multitude of children was regarded as a direct sign of the favour of the Lord. The authorship is, however, quite uncertain, and it may have been ascribed to Solomon only from the mention of “God’s beloved” (*y’dîdo*, “Jedidiah”) in the second verse; or from the belief that the “House” spoken of meant the first Temple, whereas the reference is much less exclusive.<sup>2</sup> Besides these there is at least a possibility that the first Psalm may have been composed by Solomon as an introduction to the Psalms written in the previous reign, and formed into a collection for the use of the Temple service.<sup>3</sup> The Second Psalm also accords well with the state of things in the beginning of the reign of Solomon, and may have been com-

<sup>1</sup> The title, “A Psalm *for* Solomon” is a literal rendering, but means (as throughout the Psalter) “a Psalm *of* Solomon.” The LXX. render it *εἰς Σαλωμών*—“to Solomon”; and not unnaturally, for it ends with the words, “Ended are the Prayers *of David* the son of Jesse.” But these words probably closed one of the smaller collections of Psalms, as may be inferred from the unusual addition, “the son of Jesse”; at any rate, it is not certain that they belong to the Psalm itself.

<sup>2</sup> See Perowne on the Psalms, ii. 378.

<sup>3</sup> See Perowne, i. 106. One argument in favour of this view is that the word for “*scorners*” occurs nowhere else in the Psalter, but frequently in the earlier chapters of Proverbs.



posed by or for him.<sup>1</sup> The fact, however, that even tradition assigns to him so small a share of the Psalter shows decisively that the fresh outburst of lyric poetry which marked the reign of David had partly exhausted itself and partly been diverted into other channels. Ages so widely different in their characteristics as those of David and Solomon could not possibly find their full expression in the same poetic forms. The literary productions of the age of Solomon were statelier, more artificial, less absorbingly spiritual than those which had expressed the more vivid and less restrained emotions of the rougher contemporaries of his father. Two parts of the Book of Proverbs which are believed to be Solomonic are mainly occupied with prudential and earthly wisdom. The two other books attributed to him have failed to awaken the passionate enthusiasm which all ages have felt for the Book of Psalms. Until mysticism, both Rabbinic and Scholastic, found in Canticles a field wherein to revel through long volumes of sensuous imagery, it was looked on with considerable suspicion and not admitted into the canon without safeguard and dispute. If this was the fate of the Song which was supposed to express the glowing emotions of Solomon's youth, it was also the case with the Book which was supposed to utter the despairing cynicism of his premature old age. The Book of Ecclesiastes did not secure its place in the Hagiographa without a struggle and a protest. Both books are of the highest value, but are of uncertain meaning, and are perhaps less *obviously* profitable for edification than any others in Holy Writ.

3. It would be deeply interesting if we could believe that Solomon was the author of the rich and poetic Song of Songs.<sup>2</sup> The all but unanimous voice of anything which can be called criticism decides against this supposition, and the unusual words and idioms which occur in the Song, as well as its entire scope,

<sup>1</sup> The Forty-fifth Psalm, which is certainly an epithalamium of some royal espousals, has been referred by many to the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh, or of Hiram. It is called a "song of love," but is full of a deeply religious spirit, and points to higher fulfillments in the person of an Ideal King.

<sup>2</sup> The title "Song of Songs" means "most excellent song." It is one of the forms of the Hebrew superlative, like "Holy of Holies," "Heaven of Heavens," &c.



must render his authorship more than doubtful.<sup>1</sup> Neither the title, nor the admission into the canon, nor the common belief of long centuries add anything in favour of the hypothesis. To insist on any of these arguments in the face of accumulated proofs of their untrustworthiness is a mere anachronism. When, however, some critics, and among them the Jewish historian Grätz, would assign to Canticles a date no earlier than the third, or even the second century before our era, they fail to prove their point. Ewald, whose authority as a linguist and critic is recognized, and whose teaching was the reverse of conservative, decides without hesitation that the poem is an ancient one, and perhaps not fifty years later than Solomon's reign. Grätz adduces in opposition to this view a number of words which he regards as Aramaic ; but these words may have been northern provincialisms, and they confirm the general inference, that the poem was written shortly after the disruption of the kingdom, by a subject of the house of Jeroboam. Thus, as Bishop Kaye observes, words which are regarded as strangers in Apuleius and Tertullian belong in reality to the age of Plautus. The preponderance of modern opinion, founded on independent investigation, is in favour of the conclusion of Ewald. The general vigour and purity of the Hebrew, the interest in the sights and sounds of nature, the marked resemblance in thought and diction to passages in the Book of Proverbs, the acquaintance with articles of foreign commerce, the mention of Pharaoh's chariots in Palestine, the fact that Solomon is unsuccessful in his suit to the chaste maiden, the absence of all allusion to the Temple or its worship, the analogies which the book presents to the work of the northern prophet Hosea, the mention of the Tower of David as still hung with a thousand shields ; the reference to Heshbon, which in Isa. xv. 4 belongs not to Israel, but to Moab ; the mention of Lebanon, Hermon, Amana, and Shenir, with their lions' dens and leopard-haunted groves ;<sup>2</sup> above all, the allusion to Tirzah as a lovely capital side by side with Jerusalem, whereas Tirzah ceased to be the northern capital after the reign of Omri<sup>3</sup>—these various indications may not be de-

<sup>1</sup> Passages like i. 4, 5, 12 ; iii. 6-11 ; vii. 6 ; viii. 11, 12, would not be natural on Solomon's own lips.

<sup>2</sup> vii. 4 ; iv. 4, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Cant. vi. 4. It was the capital between B.C. 975 and 924 (1 Kings xiv. 17 ; xv. 21 ; xvi. 18). It is remarkable that, intentionally or otherwise, the



cisive, but they suit well with the twofold hypothesis that the poem belongs to the tenth century before Christ, and that it is a specimen of the lost literary treasures of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Perhaps the conjecture may be too bold, but if the beautiful Shulamite had her prototype in Abishag, whom Adonijah sought in marriage, and the mere mention of whose name made Solomon flame into pitiless anger, then the northern poet may conceivably have meant to point a silent contrast between the mother of Solomon, who, though wedded and rich, yielded with disgraceful facility to the temptations of a guilty king, and the "fairest among women," the village maiden, who inflexibly resisted a more innocent advance. The Song may therefore be rightly regarded as Solomonic: that is, as due to the impulse which Solomon gave, though it seems in the highest degree improbable that it was composed by Solomon himself.

Without attempting to enter fully into this Song of Songs, we may well observe the characteristics which point to the king's influence over the development of the Hebrews.

First, we may notice the many allusions to proud buildings and royal luxury—to the Tower of David, with its thousand golden bucklers;<sup>1</sup> to the Tower of Lebanon,<sup>2</sup> which overlooked Damascus; to horses and chariots; to the splendour of Solomon's palanquin, with its gold and silver and purple, and embroidered carpets; to rings, studs of silver, and rows of jewels; to myrrh, cinnamon, spikenard, and all sorts of precious spices; to palaces inlaid with ivory, to pillars of marble in sockets of fine gold, to cedar wood, beryls, precious stones, and ivory overlaid with sapphires.<sup>3</sup>

Next, the little song abounds in allusions to Nature. Delitzsch counts in it the names of eighteen plants and thirteen animals. Yet the descriptions of scenery do not resemble the fresh and delightful simplicity of the Nature-Psalms. They are sometimes so mingled up with other thoughts as to find easier illustrations from the imagery of Arabian and Persian poets than from that of Scripture. We read of gazelles feeding among the lilies, of the henna-plants in the tropical vineyards

Greek translators avoid the mention of Tirzah, and render the word *εὐδοκία* (Vulg. *Suravis*). In 1 Kings xiv. 17 they substitute Sarira for Tirzah. This may have been due, as Dr. Ginsburg thinks, to southern jealousy.

<sup>1</sup> iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> vii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> i. 10, 11; v. 14, 15; iii 9-11; iv 13, 14.



of Engedi, of hills of myrrh and frankincense, of the south wind laden with incense, of the intoxicating scent of the mandrakes or "love-apples," of doves by the rivers of waters, of young harts on the mountains of spices. But what is far more remarkable than this is the spirit in which all these soft allusions are bathed. In the Nature-Psalms, the bright and breezy landscape is only touched upon as a reason for praising God. There the green pastures and still waters are the signs of His shepherd-care for His people. There fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm do but fulfil God's words. But in Canticles the grass is a couch for the lovers to lean upon, not an emblem of mortality; and the artificial fishpools of Heshbon are like maidens' eyes; and the cedars of Libanus are admired for their shady boughs, not ostensibly because God had planted them. The lilies and the flowers are not, as in the Sermon on the Mount, proofs of God's loving tenderness, but comparisons of physical loveliness. The lightning flashes, the winds blowing from the north or south, the streams that run among the hills, the strong mountains, and the grass that groweth upon them for the use of man, are here only viewed and introduced as scenery which bears on the central human passion.<sup>1</sup> Psalm xlv. is called "a song of loves," but in this the name of God occurs four times in seven verses, whereas throughout the Song of Solomon it occurs but once, and then merely as a kind of Hebrew superlative.<sup>2</sup>

On the surface, therefore, this poem is not intentionally a religious poem, but a very lovely song of innocent love.<sup>3</sup> If modern views of it are correct—and they are accepted by an increasing number of the most eminent critics—it tells us in dramatic form the story of how a pure love in humble life triumphed over the splendid seductions of a royal wooer. The speakers are sometimes the bride, sometimes her brothers, sometimes the bridegroom, sometimes the princesses in the palace of Jerusalem, sometimes a chorus of youths, friends of the bridegroom.<sup>4</sup> The form of it is an idyl rather than a

<sup>1</sup> See the excellent remarks of Mr. Aglen's "Introduction to the Song of Solomon"; Bishop Ellicott's Commentary, vol. iv. 385.

<sup>2</sup> viii. 6, "*A most vehement flame*"; lit. "a flame of Jah."

<sup>3</sup> This was the opinion of Bossuet, among others.

<sup>4</sup> This was first suggested by Origen. When the bride speaks she uses the feminine (i. 5). The shepherd lover is often distinguishable by his use



drama, for it has no developed plot.<sup>1</sup> A maiden of Shulam, or Shunem, has given her whole heart to a young shepherd whom she has seen while he feeds his flock among the lilies. One day, as Solomon is making one of his royal progresses northward, to some cool summer residence on the slopes of Lebanon,<sup>2</sup> he sees the beautiful virgin, and takes her to Jerusalem, hoping that amid the fascination of unaccustomed luxuries she may forget her shepherd-lover, and become one of the royal harem. But there, though all admire her matchless perfection, nothing can win her heart, or induce her willingly to exchange her humble home among the orchards and vineyards of the north for the pleasures and blandishments of the great king.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the youth to whom she is betrothed has followed her to the palace, and receives from her own lips the assurance of her unalterable love.<sup>4</sup> Feeling that he will not succeed in winning her heart, Solomon magnanimously resigns her, in all her simple innocence and virtue, to him whom she has chosen; and the lovers, as they return together hand in hand, express in the language of metaphor the happy conviction of their hearts, that the true love of one simple home is better than all the costly but unblessed enjoyments of a king's seraglio.<sup>5</sup>

We cannot pretend that this outline of the meaning of the poem, widely as it has been accepted, can be regarded as a final *datum* of criticism. The poem is complex, the transitions are abrupt, there are no indications to mark the different interlocutors,<sup>6</sup> and many of the details are still of uncertain applica-

of pastoral language (i. 3, 4, 7; ii. 10-13, &c.); other speakers, by the context and correct translation (which in some passages is far from easy).

<sup>1</sup> The notion—perhaps partly suggested by the Latin title *Cantica Canticorum*—that the Song of Songs has no real unity, but is, in fact, only an anthology of love-poems, is now deservedly and universally abandoned. Gregory of Naziansus calls it “a bridal drama and song”; Patrick, “a pastoral eclogue”; Lowth, “an epithalamium.”

<sup>2</sup> iv. 6-11.

<sup>3</sup> iii. 1-5. These various scenes, appeals, interchanges of speakers, &c., are entirely in accordance with the abrupt, passionate style of Eastern songs.

<sup>4</sup> v. 1-8.

<sup>5</sup> viii. 1-7, 14. See Dr. Ginsburg, in Kitto's “Cyclop.” iii. 870.

<sup>6</sup> This source of difficulty is noticed by Thomas Aquinas: “Est in hoc obscurissimus iste liber, quia nullæ ibi commemorantur personæ, cum tamen stylo quasi comico sit compositus” (quoted by Mr. Kingsburg in “Speaker's Commentary,” iv. 665).



tion. Nevertheless, the notion that the Song really was what it seems to be—a poem of pure affection, triumphant over all temptations—is in obvious accord with all its phenomena, and furnishes a consistent and beautiful interpretation. Many Christian expositors and thinkers of all schools have accepted the theory of a primary and literal sense in one or other of its numerous modifications. It was natural that in past ages, when comparative literature was as yet undreamed of, when Hebrew was only known to one expositor out of a thousand, and when there was no such thing as a science of historic and philological criticism, the poem—so inexplicable to *a priori* theories of the nature of Revelation—should have been interpreted in senses which seemed pious, though they involved an immense anachronism and a total transference of the *prima facie* meaning. But methods of interpretation which were possible and venial, which were even inevitable and praiseworthy, in the times of the Fathers and Schoolmen, have long become impossible to minds which have remained open to the slow light of expanding revelation, which is the ever-renewed teaching of the Holy Spirit of God. The sermons of St. Bernard on the Song of Songs, though not wholly free from the peril which must ever attend the use of sensuous imagery to express spiritual truths had, in his day, their own beauty and fitness. Yet if St. Bernard were now living, he, in the spirit which believes that God's orthodoxy is the truth, might be the first to reject the *relevance* of his comments to the text which he is professing to illustrate; the first to reject as an arbitrary fancy the reading into the poem of an advanced Christology; the first, even, to feel that there is an intrinsic irreverence in attaching unreal meanings to books which we profess to regard as sacred. To those who have been forced to the conviction that the writer had primarily no such meanings as those attributed to him by Jerome or the Mediæval Church, there would be something absolutely shocking in the application to Christ of many passages written in the warm, physical, descriptive language of Eastern passion. A criticism which calls itself religious may denounce the abandonment of obsolete and baseless traditions, but he who speaks deceitfully for God, he who thinks to be orthodox by saying what he might know to be untrue is as if he offered swine's flesh upon an idol altar.



If the view of modern expositors be correct, the central theme of the book may be found in viii. 6, 7—

“ O set me as a signet on thine heart,  
 A signet on thine arm !  
 For strong as Death is love,  
 inflexible as Sheol is jealousy.  
 The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,  
 A very flame of the Lord ;  
 Many waters cannot quench Love,  
 Neither can the floods drown it ;  
 Though one should give his all away for love,  
 It (*such purchased love*) would be utterly condemned ! ”

Now if this be indeed the motive of the poem, so far from being displeased at its *superficially* non-religious character, we ought rather to be glad that the passion and poetry of pure love find their sanction in Holy Writ. Esther is a sacred book, though the name of God does not once occur in it ; and Canticles a sacred book, though, as in other idyls of all ages, God is not directly referred to. For though unmentioned, God is essentially presupposed, even as the bottom of the ocean must be presupposed, though it is not seen. He is the Creator and Sanctifier of that marriage “ which is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.” This kind of literature, common in all ages and countries, is especially luxurious in the East, though scarcely in a single instance, whether in the poetry of Persia, of India, or of Arabia, is it found in a form which, while impassioned, is yet so transparently pure as the Song of Solomon. It would have been strange if no specimen of it were preserved in the sacred records. The Hebrews needed a poem which, with all the glow of genuine fervour, and all the rich imagery of description, is devoted to the glorification of monogamy as superior to the languid luxuries of a debasing polygamy, and to the exaltation of love, in its most holy and natural form, over the seductive glamour of wealth and power.

Seriously alarmed at the admission of the Book into the Jewish canon, and so doubtful as to its influence, that they forbade the young to read it, some of the Rabbis were first induced to get rid of their difficulty by obliterating altogether the natural sense. In the Zohar, for instance—a cabbalistic book probably of mediæval origin—it is all referred to Israel. “ I am black, but comely,” becomes the Jewish Church—black because



of its depression, comely because of its devotion to the Law. "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land," is regarded as an announcement of the Coming Messiah. Allegoric interpretations were regarded as pious, and in those days were not impossible. They were introduced by Origen into the Christian Church. From the fourth century onward they reigned with almost undisputed sway, and in monkish hands often assumed forms which are the very reverse of pure or wholesome. "Thy teeth are white"—that is, thy teachers are orthodox. "Stay me with flagons"—that is, support me with the chalice of the Eucharist. "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet" (iv. 3): this refers to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. In Jerome, "mountains of myrrh" is explained to mean those who mortify their body; and "flocks of Libanus" to mean troops of virgins. Such comments are incomparably less absurd and less offensive than many which might be quoted. For what are they intended? If they be meant for exegesis, they are unspeakably false; if they be meant for edifying application, they are strangely needless and painfully irrelevant. They may have their attractiveness for a certain order of minds, but they will seem the very reverse of pious or desirable to those who prefer truth to tradition, and who believe that God loves a manly sincerity more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Innocent and virtuous happiness is none so superabundant that we can spare the song devoted to its enhancement, and the consecration of the affections which are the basis of moral life and domestic love. Again, these noble, moral meanings are entirely lost in that view which, while accepting the poem as literal, represents it as an *epithalamium* or the *espousals* of Solomon with the beautiful Abishag of Shunem. A love which she could only share with (at the very lowest) "sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number" would be no true love at all, but a sensual passion, opposite to and not in accordance with God's primeval institution; nor would there be any room for sweet rural delights in the perfumed chambers and amid the gilded *ennui* of a palace seraglio. The poem would then be reduced to a vapid allegory, unsuited by its very structure and primary meaning for any deeper or mystic sense.

Viewed in the more natural sense which we have indicated, the Song of Songs becomes indeed sacred, and we have no sympathy with the narrow views of the School of Shammai,



who ventured to reject it as too mundane to be worthy of a place in the sacred canon. We do not, indeed, agree with the arbitrary dictum of R. Aqiba, followed by Origen, that "all the Scriptures are holy, but *this sublime song is the Holy of Holies*;" for if the allegorical sense which he gave to it were its real sense it would be strange indeed—not to dwell on numerous other difficulties—that not the remotest hint of any such sense is given in the poem itself; that both among the Rabbis and the Fathers the *early* study of the book was discouraged lest the sensuous character of some of the diction should have an undesirable effect on the passions;<sup>1</sup> that in Scripture itself the book is not so much as once alluded to; that in the age to which it belongs, there is not the remotest trace of the feelings which would turn it into a sort of "Imitatio Christi"; and, above all, that neither our Lord, nor St. Paul, nor St. John, nor any apostle, once referred to it as illustrating in any way the relations between God and Israel, or between Christ and His Church. But I heartily agree with a modern commentator in the view that this mystical sense may be true religiously, though exegetically untenable. So long as it be not pushed to the wild extravagances which occur in some of the mediæval commentaries, we may well claim for the language of Canticles the privilege which belongs to all inspired language, namely, that it extends beyond the immediate occasion, and lends itself to many germinal and far-reaching developments. So far we would leave room for the mystic application, and even within reasonable limits for the allegorical, so long as it makes no pretence whatever to be the literal meaning. Seeing that the poem, with all its warmth of imagination, "might have been," as Herder said, "written in Paradise," no harm could arise from the secondary and homiletic transference of its primary meaning to express analogous emotions in another sphere. And yet will any honest man read over such passages as iv. 2, 5, 9; vii. 8, 9, &c., and—bearing in mind, as he must do, the terrible violations of taste and purity in some patristic and mediæval writings which have arisen from the application of such imagery to Christ—will he not admit that the irreverence, if such it be, of recognizing the literal sense of the poem in its pure morality is far less shocking than the

<sup>1</sup> It was not used in the most ancient Lectionaries, nor is it in our own.



reverence of indiscriminately transferring to our love for Christ the passionate expression of the love of lovers? The *comparison* of the bride by some Jewish expositors to Israel, and by some to Wisdom, was not unnatural; and though the poem contains passages in which we shrink from accepting the wholly unauthoritative headings to the chapters in our Authorized Version, there is nothing objectionable, for those who like it, in using the Song with modesty and reverence as *illustrative* of the love of God to the soul of man.

If it be true, as a part of the Divine economy of the life of man, that pure love is one of the most precious gifts of God to man; that

“All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
Whatever stirs this mortal flame,  
Are all but ministers of love,  
And feed his sacred flame;”

if there is a glory in the triumph over dazzling temptations of that womanhood which was so downtrodden in ancient and heathen lands; if Christianity has sanctified and glorified the love which leads to hallowed wedlock;—then we may well agree with Niebuhr when he says that “there would be something wanting in the Bible if there was not found there an expression of the deepest and the strongest of all human feelings.”<sup>1</sup> In this consecration of a supremely noble emotion many will see the real significance of the Song of Songs; but the deepest, most impassioned love of earth—love strong as death—may be used without blame to furnish a symbol of the unspeakable yearning of a soul which, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so longeth for Thee, O God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was in answer to a young pastor who asked him to explain why a love-song had been admitted into the canon (Renan, “La Cantique des Cantiques,” p. 147).

<sup>2</sup> No one can read without sympathy the beautiful poem of the Bishop of Derry on “An Old Volume of Sermons,” in which he speaks with bitter disdain of Renan’s Essay on the Canticles, and rapturous approval of St. Bernard’s sermons. Surely the view which the bishop adopts is built on an unreal basis. Emotion, saintliness, what we regard as holy and divinely spiritual, is one thing; philology, criticism, the plain facts of history and literature, are another. St. Bernard was a saint thrilling with the most Divine love for his Saviour, and Mons. Renan is a Parisian sceptic of the nineteenth century. The thoughts of St. Bernard may be transcendently more precious in the region of adoration and holiness than those of Mons



Renan, but that is no proof that his *interpretation* is truer. His exegesis, like that which prevailed for a thousand years, was *as exegesis* founded on principles radically untenable ; but every aspiration and every emotion to which he gives such eloquent utterance remains absolutely true, if not one sentence of his " impassioned prose " was in any way relevant to the primary meaning of the Song of Songs. Peace and purity and saintship are possessions incomparably more precious than all the knowledge in the world, but they confer on no man a right to be regarded as a final authority in questions of criticism or interpretation. They belong to many a holy soul whose views in such matters are necessarily most ignorant and most mistaken as regards every question except the broadest and simplest facts of the gospel of Christ.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

Due to the general impulse given to Jewish thought by Solomon, though it cannot have been written by him—The title Qoheleth—Conjectures as to the date of the Book—"Elohim"—A struggle with perplexity and despondency—Outline of the Book : 1. The Prologue ; 2. The first section, personal experiences ; 3. The second section ; 4. The third section ; 5. The fourth section ; partial conclusion ; 6. The Epilogue—A general summary—Progressiveness of revelation—Doubts of some of the Rabbis—Two general lessons—The emptiness of worldly pleasure—The teaching of bitter experience.

IF Solomon's authorship of the Song of Songs must be regarded as being in the highest degree dubious, it may now be looked upon as a certain result of advancing knowledge that he was not the author of Ecclesiastes. "If the Book of Qoheleth," says Delitzsch, "be of old Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language." And Dr. Ginsburg says, "We could as easily believe that Chaucer is the author of 'Rasselas' as that Solomon wrote Qoheleth." The past tense in Eccl. i. 12 alone seems to imply that Solomon was not the real author, nor could he well have written iii. 16, iv. 6, v. 8, vii. 7, &c.<sup>1</sup> The doubts as to its authorship are as old as the days of Shammai in the century before Christ, and there was a strong opposition among the Jews even to the admission of its canonicity. At the present day there is not a single eminent Rabbi who would not follow Geiger and Grätz among his own countrymen, and a host of Christian commentators from Luther and Grotius down to Ewald and even Keil, in declaring that

<sup>1</sup> See Plumptre, "Ecclesiastes," p. 24.



whoever was the author Solomon could not have been. Those who have the slightest acquaintance with ancient literature, know that the adoption of a pseudonym involved no dishonest intention, and was indeed one of the most familiar of literary expedients. The internal evidence deducible from the tone of the Book—the condition of society which it implies, and the traces which it contains of acquaintance with pessimism, Sadduceeism, asceticism, and various phases of Greek speculation—convince the majority of modern expositors that it is later than the Exile, and was probably written in the third century before Christ. We cannot, therefore, use it as a book of any *historical* authority about Solomon. The Canticles, even though not from his pen, may furnish us with some conception of his songs which are no longer extant; but Ecclesiastes is only a late and traditional, if not imaginary, representation of his doubts and difficulties and of the philosophy, or at least the restful conviction, to which they finally led him. It is, however, an entire mistake to represent the Book as an expression of repentance. There is no trace of penitence in it. Yet the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are important specimens of that “sapiential” literature—that phase of Hebrew thought called “wisdom” (*khokma*)—which has been for ages associated with the wise king’s name.

Even the significance of the title—Qoheleth—is much disputed. The word does not occur elsewhere in Scripture, and was perhaps coined by the author himself. It has been understood to mean “the gatherer of wisdom,” or “the gatherer of the people of God,” or “the gathered re-united soul,” or a “moralist,” or “an assembly.” The Greek word Ecclesiastes means “a summoner of assemblies,” and the name “Preacher” (Vulg. *conciliator*), is accepted as representing Qoheleth by the Jewish Midrash Rabba. As it is supported not only by Luther and other translators, but by the high linguistic authority of Gesenius, Herzfeld, Knobel, Stuart, and others, it may be regarded as representing at least a fair approximation to the meaning of the word, though perhaps it may be more closely represented by “the debater” or “the ideal teacher of wisdom speaking in the assembly.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Plumptre’s “Ecclesiastes,” p. 17; Zöckler, “Handb. d. Theol. Wissensch.” p. 161. When personified the feminine word is treated as masculine, and means, perhaps, “The speaker in the assembly.” But it



As very few are now found to support the Solomonic authorship a wide scope for conjecture is left as to the date. How completely uncertain is the decision may be shown by the fact that the suggested dates differ from B.C. 975 to B.C. 10;<sup>1</sup> but those who will consult any good modern commentary, such as the learned treatise of Dr. Ginsburg, or the very interesting one of the Dean of Wells, or the lectures of the Dean of Westminster, will see abundant proofs of the modern tone of the book, and of allusions to fact and traces of thought which are inconsistent with the position of Solomon,<sup>2</sup> and cannot be attributed to him without wild improbability.<sup>3</sup> It has Aramaic words, non-Semitic words, and words of late Hebrew. It was probably written after the Exile.<sup>4</sup>

The name of God is mentioned in this book twenty-seven times. The writer does not abandon his belief though he leaves it unreconciled with his perplexities. There is no great light or warmth in its influence. It cannot be said that the pervading thought of the main portion of the book is deeply religious or very elevated. It is utterly unlike the cheerful holiness and radiant confidence which breathes through the Forty-fourth and many other Psalms. Of the Mosaic covenant there is scarcely even a trace. God is simply Elohim, the Creator; the name Jehovah, the Eternal of the Covenant, does not once occur. God is never *near* to his apprehension, but far away. His tone is wholly without enthusiasm. He warns against over-righteousness and over-wisdom (vii. 16), as well as against over-wickedness. The sentence might have come from the sermon of an eighteenth-century bishop.

does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, and Aquila leaves it untranslated. Feminine forms are sometimes used for offices, and even for the names of men.

<sup>1</sup> The latter date is suggested by Grätz, who, on precarious grounds, refers it to the times of Herod the Great, and sees in it "in part a polemic against the rising asceticism of the Essenes."

<sup>2</sup> See iii. 16; iv. 1; v. 8; x. 7, &c.

<sup>3</sup> For parallelisms to the Book of Malachi see Dr. Plumptre's notes on Eccl. v. 1-6; for traces of Post-exilian thought the notes on iii. 19-21, vii. 1-6, 16; and for apparent reference to Greek philosophy and literature the notes on i. 3-11, ii. 24, iii. 20, v. 18, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Delitzsch thinks that the pathetic allusion of vi. 3 is to Artaxerxes Mnemon, who had 115 children and died at 94, and to his murdered successor Artaxerxes Ochus.



The advice which the writer gives, even when it has an Epicurean sound, is the outcome of despondency and gloom. Eudæmonism seems to him better than ascetism, but it does not satisfy him. Life is too short for it, sorrow too multiform, death too alarming, pleasure itself too empty. There is a hesitating half-heartedness even in his exhortations to moderate and rational enjoyment. He is oppressed by the thought of death, and perplexed by the burden and mystery of an unintelligible world. He has "swallowed all formulæ," and banished all gracious illusions, and he faces life in its dreariest aspect, though in moods inconsistent with each other. His thoughts reflect the passing emotion, and it is hence difficult to frame them into any harmonious system. His repeated "vanity of vanities" sounds like a death-knell to the sort of sad cheerfulness which he himself recommends. Of personal immortality he scarcely dreams; his words rightly rendered give no clear promise of any life beyond the grave.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to make an accurate analysis of the book and its sections. Herder thought that he recognized two voices in it, but believed, on the whole, that no connexion could be discovered between its isolated records of experience. It has, however, a Prologue (i. 1-11); an Epilogue (xii. 8-14); and four main divisions.

1. The Prologue introduces the main theme of difficulty and discussion, which is the supreme emptiness of life, the monotony which accompanies, and the oblivion which awaits, its constantly recurrent phenomena.

2. In the first section (i. 12-ii. 26) the writer, speaking in the assumed person of King Solomon, details his experience of futile efforts to reach happiness, knowledge, and what was usually called wisdom. His endeavours were but "emptiness and a striving after wind." They were ineffectual and unsatisfying (i. 12-18).

Then he tried laughter and mirth and pleasure, and the cheer of wine; but that, too, was but madness and emptiness (ii. 1-3). Next he tried luxury, art, magnificence, wealth, music, and every form of indulgence, and he found that also entirely profitless (ii. 4-11). He turned to the contemplation of human nature in its various phases of wisdom and folly, and though it

<sup>1</sup> See iii. 21; vi. 6; ix. 2, 5, 6, 10; xi. 8; xii. 7.



became clear to him "that wisdom exceedeth folly as far as light exceedeth darkness" (i. 12, 13), yet the weariness, the certainty and the unknown issues of death, together with the necessity of leaving all the results of his labour to one who might be a mere fool, made him hate everything, and look on life itself as mere "vanity and striving after wind," which reduces all the thoughts of man to despair, making all his days sorrow, and his travail grief, and even his nights unrestful (ii. 12-23), so that death and nothingness seem better than life.<sup>1</sup> And all this bitter experience drove him to the poor conclusion that the best thing to do is calmly to eat and drink, and enjoy such pleasure as God may allow us in this brief life. Righteousness, he sees, does involve wisdom and joy; but to the sinner there is nothing but useless travail; so that this also is "vanity and a striving after wind" (ii. 24-26).

3. In the next section (iii. 9-vi. 7), the same fundamental theme is again debated with variations. There is a time for everything, and perhaps happiness may be found in the right use of opportunity. It may be so. A sort of tranquil contentment is perhaps attainable (iii. 1-15), and certainly amid the perplexities and perversities of human institutions there is discernible a law of moral government, "a stream of tendency that makes for righteousness." But then this thought is again confronted by the awful universal fact of death, and man's utter ignorance as to its issues. On the whole, then, there seems no more satisfactory conclusion than that a man should rejoice in his works and make the best of life as it is (iii. 16-22).

And yet the conclusion is surrounded by sadness! Death, or not to have been born at all, seemed better when he saw the power of the oppressor and the comfortless tears of the oppressed (iv. 1-3). Labour too is envied if it succeeds, and indolence is fatal. Peace and a moderate lot are best. Then after furnishing us with some of the miscellaneous results of his experience about the sadness of lonely wealth (7-12), and the weariness of vicissitude, and the inefficacy of government (13-16), he turns to religious considerations, and sees that when they are free from superstition and hypocrisy they confirm the conclusions of his philosophy as to the emptiness of wealth, and the

<sup>1</sup> See ii. 17; iv. 2, 3; vii. 1.



wisdom of calm and moderate and self-controlled enjoyment (v. 1-vi. 9).<sup>1</sup>

4. Once more he reviews, illustrates, enforces this result of all that he had observed and felt. Virtue, the control of the passions, a wise acceptance of all the blessings which God vouchsafes to us, a chastened resignation in view of the strange insoluble enigmas of life, obedience to just rule, a conviction that, on the whole, it is better with the good man than with the sinner, even in this life and amid obvious perturbations of the moral order—these all lead once more to the old conclusion that, after all, there “is no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry”—in one word, to make the best of life such as it is, and such as God has given it to us, in spite of all its ignorance and emptiness (vi. 10-viii. 15). Thus it is to this conviction that he again and again reverts.<sup>2</sup>

5. The problems of life seem so far to be insoluble, and there still remains the dark shadow of death and oblivion (viii. 16-ix. 6). Let us then work, and be as glad as it is permitted us to be (ix. 7-10). Even so we cannot indeed escape the sad chances of life (11, 12), nor is wisdom and service always rewarded (13-16). Yet certain rules of wisdom remain, on the whole, unshaken, and by those we should guide our life however sad or perplexing may be its external conditions (ix. 17-x. 20). But the Preacher will enforce the conclusion to which he has now so often been led. It is not good to dwell too much on problems which we cannot solve, or facts which we cannot alter. Let us do our duty never forgetting the end of life. Something will come of it, and that issue must be left in the hands of God, Who alone knows what life means. The days of old age, the days of sorrow, the days of sickness, the day of death are inevitably at hand. It must be confessed once more that all is a

<sup>1</sup> Cheyne adopts different divisions—

1. Prologue—i. 1-11.
2. A biographical sketch—i. 12-iv. 17.
3. Proverbial experiences—v. 1-vii. 14.
4. Personal experiences—vii. 15-ix. 12.
5. Various observations—ix. 13-x. 15.
6. Parting counsels—x. 16-xii. 8.
7. An epilogue added later by another hand—xii. 9-14.

But the arrangement is so difficult to decide that Bickell supposes an accidental displacement of two leaves in some early manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 24 ; iii. 12, 13, 22 ; v. 18 ; viii. 15 ; ix. 7-9 ; xi. 9, 10.



thrice-repeated emptiness, yet the truth remains that it is best to accept in the spirit of thankfulness, with humility, thoughtfulness, and the fear of God, such innocent happiness as God may allow to us. There is no more to be said than this. Life is vanity, but perhaps there may be some dim, mysterious, unformulated hope in the thought that when the dust returns to the earth, the spirit also returns to God who gave it (xi. 1–xii. 8).

6. The Book ends with a brief Epilogue (xii. 9–14), whether added by the author himself, or, as some prefer to believe,<sup>1</sup> by another who admired the power and genius of the Book, but saw that it was in form very unsystematic, and that the conclusion was left after all in a vague and dubious form. If so, the author of the epilogue desired to add to the treatise a religious, and perfectly intelligible summary of all that was best in the one main inference to which it led. That summary did not profess to solve the terrible riddle of human life; but it said in tones of consummate dignity—that though (as “the Qoheleth”<sup>2</sup> confesses), much might remain obscure, though books might be endlessly multiplied, and study end only in weariness, yet one rule stood sure, and was sufficient for the moral guidance of life if not for its complete happiness or full illumination. “This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard; <sup>3</sup> fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” We dare not live in sin, we dare not live at haphazard, we dare not live as hypocrites. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing whether it be good or whether it be evil.”

Thus then vanity of vanities—the vanity of knowledge, of

<sup>1</sup> Döderlein, Bertholdt, Umbreit, Knobel, De Jong, Krochmal, Geiger, Jost, Grätz, Renan, Kalisch, Nöldeke, Bickell, Cheyne.

<sup>2</sup> xii. 9. Everywhere else the writer *calls himself* Qoheleth. Here alone he is spoken of *ab extra*—“the Qoheleth.” It is supposed, however, that in vii. 27 the true reading should be “*amar haqqoheleth*,” and that the words are the marginal interpolation of some reader who dissented from Qoheleth’s low estimate of women. Cheyne, “Job and Solomon,” p. 231, n. Kuenen (“Religion of Israel,” iii. 153–161) maintains the unity of the Book.

<sup>3</sup> Possibly the text is here corrupt, Klostermann (see Cheyne, “Job and Solomon,” i. 232), thought that the word “vanity” has dropped out, and that the following clause is meant to define in what sense it should be truly said that “all is vanity;” or we may take it to mean, “Final results all having been heard.”



riches, of pleasure, of fame, of injustice, oblivion, and oppression, of solitariness and mirth, of women and kings and courts, the vanity of all human hopes, wishes, and attainments, and speculations—is twenty times repeated in the burden of the Book. The remedies it proposes bear no proportion either in space or in efficacy to the multitude of disappointments on which it dwells.

It may be said that its recommendation of virtue and resigned enjoyment if a wise, is yet a very partial and imperfect, conclusion. The answer is that all revelation is progressive, and that until Christ's resurrection brought life and immortality to light, many Jews had but a vague belief in the future. It was to them a dim hope, a splendid guess, not a cardinal article of faith. Writing in troubled times, writing perhaps amid deep personal gloom, and less as a philosopher than as a practical guide, the writer gives the valuable testimony of experience to the blessedness of a practical and attainable end which may be made a stepping-stone to higher things. He leads us at least to the truth that the Chief Good is not to be found in wealth, or in pleasure, or even in knowledge, but in duty, in the fear of God, and the modest enjoyment of such blessings as we have, while we leave the shadowed present and the uncertain future in the hands of our Creator. He preaches resignation, not fatalism; temperance, not asceticism; serene humility, not ecstatic assurance.

The doubts about the acceptance of Ecclesiastes into the sacred canon existed even among the Rabbis. In the tract Shabbath we find the question, "Thou Solomon, where was thy wisdom, and where was thy understanding? Not only do thy words contradict those of thy father, but they contradict also thine own. Thy father said, 'The dead praise not Thee, O Lord;' <sup>1</sup> but thou sayest, 'Wherefore I praised the dead;' and again, 'A living dog is better than a dead lion.'" <sup>2</sup> The Book, however, can be as little judged by isolated phrases as the Book of Job.

It was the epilogue alone, as Jerome expressly tells us,<sup>3</sup>—with

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Eccles. iv. 2, ix. 4. Shabbath f. 30. 1. The Rabbis contrast ii. 2 with viii. 15, and viii. 2, vii. 13 with viii. 14, vii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> It was in danger of obliteration for its assertion of the "vanity" of God's creatures, and its praise of food, drink, and enjoyment; in other



one or two passages which recent editors regard as possible interpolations,<sup>1</sup>—which secured the tardy admission of the Book into the Jewish canon. This was decided at the Synod of Jamnia, A.D. 90, and the Jewish scholar Krochmal thinks that the epilogue was then added to obviate any dangerous misuse of the alternate pessimism and Epicureanism which marks the oscillation of “the Preacher” between hopeless despondency and submissive acquiescence. “Nothing is more certain,” says Cheyne, “than that the book was an *Antilegomenon* (of disputed canonicity) in Palestine in the first century before Christ.” The Book had been accepted, but it was not till a second synod at Jamnia in 118 that it was finally sanctioned.

It has made its deepest impression partly by the energy with which it represents the emptiness of worldly pleasure, and partly by the sense of conviction that we must learn, even by bitter experience, if need be, that good is best. The first experience is universal. The ancients symbolized it when they sang of the feast of Phineus polluted by Harpy-talons and Harpy-wings. For by the Harpies they meant, “the gusts of vexatious, fretful, lawless passion, vain and overshadowing, discontented and lamenting, meagre and insane—spirits of wasted energy, and wandering desire, and unappeased famine and unsatisfied hope; the pitiful, unconquerable coiling and uncoiling and self-involved returns of some sickening famine and thirst at heart.”

i. Vanity of vanities has been the universal epitaph of human greatness. Need we do more than to refer to Tiberius, lord of the world, and the gloomiest man who walked upon it; to Septimius Severus saying, “*Omnia fui et nihil expedit;*” to Abderrahman the Magnificent, recording that in all his splendid life he could count but fourteen happy days; to Charles V., gloomy and gluttonous in his retirement at Yuste; to Louis XIV., with “the sense of pleasure extinguished in his heart,” and taught, as his wife said, by age and devotion, “the vanity of everything he

words, because of its mingled pessimism and hedonism; but “*ex hoc uno capitulo mernisse auctoritatem ut in divinorum numero eloquiorum poneretur*” (“Præf. in Eccl.” Opp. ii. 713, ed. Martianay).

<sup>1</sup> xi. 6 *b*; xii. 1 *a*, 8 *b*. Luzzatto quotes in support of this Shabbath 7, 1. Some add iii. 17. There is nothing to *prove* the supposition, but there is nothing *a priori* impossible in it, for it is admitted by all alike that many of the sacred books were more or less “edited” in the days of Ezra, and possibly later.



was formerly fond of?" Vanity of vanities are the first words of the "Imitatio Christi," and the last of "Vanity Fair."

ii. Nor can the second truth ever become trite; its significance is inexhaustible, and it has to be learned afresh by each new generation. It remains one of the certain facts of life that happiness depends on ourselves and not on our outward circumstances; that it is conditioned, not by what we have, but by what we are; that—

"Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

The Qoheleth records the bitter and varied experiences which led him to rest on the broad foundation of these truths; and these "confessions of an inquiring spirit," will for ever retain their value and interest for sad and suffering men. But the true solution of the perplexities which tormented the Hebrew thinker, and the only real alleviation of the miseries about which he complained have been furnished to us by that fuller revelation in comparison of which the wisdom of the Preacher was but rudimentary, and his knowledge only as the light of a star which is lost in glory when the dayspring has arisen with healing in its wings.<sup>1</sup>

Neither to Canticles nor to Qoheleth is there a single reference in the New Testament; to the Book of Proverbs there are more than twelve.

<sup>1</sup> "We may," says Dr. Salmon (Bishop Ellicott's Commentary), "set aside one system of interpretation, although it found favour in the Christian Church for centuries; that namely in which this Old Testament book was made to teach New Testament doctrine from one end to the other, and the most unlikely verses were forced to prophecy of Christ."





## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

Solomonic proverbs—Three words—1. *Mashal*, “a parable”; Various applications of the word—2. *Chîdâh*, “a riddle”; Enigmas in the East; “Dark sayings” in the Proverbs—Prov. xxvi. 10—3. *Mlêtzah*, “a figure”—Outline of the Book: 1. The Introduction; A work of moral guidance—2. The Wisdom section; How it differs from the rest of the Book; Conceptions of “wisdom” among the Hebrews—3. “The Proverbs of Solomon;” Their general structure; Their substance; Twofold beauty of tone: i. It is kindly; ii. It is religious—Few traces of the national religion—4. “The words of the wise”—5. Further “words of the wise”—6. Hezekiah’s collection—7. Three appendices: *α*. The words of Agur; *β*. The exhortation of Lemuel; *γ*. The acrostic of the virtuous woman—General remarks: 1. Cosmopolitan spirit—2. Had the Hebrews a philosophy?—3. Three phases of thought about difficulties in the moral government of the world: *α*. The era of general principles; *β*. The era of difficulties; *γ*. The era of acquiescence; *δ*. The final eschatological conclusion—4. Sapiential literature not Messianic, yet in one sense Christological—5. Exaltation of morality—6. Frequent references to the Book in the New Testament.

IN the Book of Proverbs, more probably by far than in the other books attributed to Solomon, we may possess some of his contributions to the thought of the world. “He spake three thousand proverbs,” says the historian of the Kings.<sup>1</sup>

1. The word which we render “proverb” has a very wide latitude in the Hebrew language. It is *mashal*, and comes from a root which means, “to be like.” In the English version it is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings iv. 32.



rendered, “by-word,” “parable,” and “proverb,” but in its first intention it signified, “a comparison.”

Of these comparisons we have large numbers in the Book of Proverbs. Such are the following :—

“As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman that is without discretion” (xi. 22).

“As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” (xxv. 25).

“As a bag of gems in a heap of stones so is he that giveth honour to a fool” (xxvi. 8).

And since a careless, uninstructed person may wholly miss the point of the comparison, and so render it inapplicable, we are told that, “The legs of the lame are not equal ; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.”

Sometimes the simile takes the form of a metaphor, as in the “proverb” quoted by Ezekiel (xviii. 2), “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

And sometimes it is expanded into a sort of allegory, as when a lesson is derived from the condition of the sluggard’s garden (xxiv. 30–34).

The word *mashal* is applied in other books of Scripture to poems like those of Balaam ; or figurative harangues like those of Ezekiel ;<sup>1</sup> or songs of triumph, or sarcasm, as in Micah (ii. 4), Habakkuk (ii. 6), and Isaiah (xiv. 4).

But its commonest application was to brief sententious sayings like, “Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked” (1 Sam. xxiv. 13), and it is of such proverbs—the words of the wise, or maxims into which are concentrated the long results of observation and experience — that a large part of the Book of Proverbs consists.

2. In this Book are also to be found what the Hebrews called “riddles,” or “dark sayings.” One of the avowed objects of the Book was that the young especially “should understand a proverb and a figure ;<sup>2</sup> the words of the wise and their dark sayings.”

The Hebrew word rendered “dark sayings,” and in other passages “hard question,” and “riddle,” is *Chîdâh* (חִידָה).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xxiii., xxiv. ; Ezek. xvii. 2, xx. 47, xxiv. 3, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Not “and the interpretation,” as in the Authorized Version.

<sup>3</sup> In 1 Kings x. 1 ; 2 Chron. ix. 1, it is applied to the questions put to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba ; in Judg. xiv. 4 to Samson’s riddle. See, too, Ezek. xvii. 2 ; Ps. xlix. 4.



It means, literally, "a knot."<sup>1</sup> Of actual riddles we have no trace in the Book of Proverbs, unless we regard those in the thirtieth chapter as intended to be such. What are the four small things on earth which are wise and clever? The answer is the ants, the coneys, the locusts, the lizards; and the answer is justified by keen observations on their natural instincts. What three things are intolerable, and a fourth still more intolerable? The answer is a slave in power, a fool full of meat, a hateful woman when she is married, and a female slave who dispossesses her mistress. What three things are insatiable, and a fourth could never have enough? The answer is Sheol, and the barren womb, and the parched earth, and fire. They are offered in illustration of the saying, "The horseleach hath two daughters crying, Give, give!"<sup>2</sup>

Enigmas, in the modern sense of the term, are hardly found in the Book of Proverbs, but play some part in the story of Solomon. The Septuagint translators say of the Queen of Sheba, that "she came to try Solomon *with enigmas*;"<sup>3</sup> and Josephus quotes from two secular historians — Menander of Ephesus and Dios — to confirm his story that Solomon challenged Hiram with riddles, for which he was to pay a large fine if he failed to answer them.<sup>4</sup> There is an obvious pleasure in such difficult and intricate sayings, and all Orientals have been fond of them. There are collections of riddles in Persian and Arabic, and they formed an occasional amusement at the banquets of Greeks and Romans.

When, however, we find among the Proverbs, of which the translation is generally easy, verses and phrases which admit of many different interpretations, and different vowel-points, we may probably recognize in them those "dark sayings" which

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Latin *scirpus*. Aul. Gell. "Noct. Att." xii. 6. We have specimens of Greek riddles, &c. (γρίφοι), in Athen., "Deipnos." x. 69-83.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxx. 15. St. Augustine calls this "an obscure allegory."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings x. 1, ἐν ἀνίγμασι.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 5, § 3. Dean Plumptre ("Dictionary of the Bible," s.v. Solomon) mentions a curious mediæval story as possibly founded on the tradition of Hiram's victory over Solomon, by the aid of the boy Abdemon. Solomon is then outwitted by a deformed dwarf named Thorolf. The subject is handled by Wünsche, "Die Räthselweisheit," 1883.



were purposely intended to exercise the ingenuity. As a specimen of these, we may mention Prov. xxvi. 10. In our Authorized Version it is rendered, "The great *God* that formed all *things* both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors."

In the Revised Version it is—

"As an archer that woundeth all,

So is he that hireth the fool, and he that hireth them that pass by."

The margin again gives—

"A master-worker formeth all things ;

But he that hireth the fool is as one that hireth them that pass by.'

Rosenmüller renders it—

"The mighty man causes terror ;

So does he who hires the fool and the transgressor."

Several great Hebrew scholars, like Gesenius, Hitzig, and Umbreit, translate the words thus—

"Much produces all ;<sup>1</sup>

But he who employs a fool is as one who employs passers-by."

Delitzsch again, altering the vowel-points, makes them mean—

"Much bringeth forth all,

But the hire of a fool, and his hirer, perish."

3. A third expression used in Prov. i. 6, to describe the contents of the book, is *M'létzah*. It is rendered "*an interpretation*," but is rather "*a figure*"—something bent or oblique. It only occurs elsewhere in Hab. ii. 6, where it is rendered, "*a taunting proverb*."

When we turn from the general contents of the Book of Proverbs to its structure, we see at once that it falls into seven parts :—

1. The Introduction—i. 1-7.
2. The Wisdom section—i. 8-ix. 18.
3. The collection of four hundred proverbs—x. 1-xxii. 16.
4. "The words of the wise"—xxii. 17-xxiv. 23.
5. Another short collection of the words of the wise—xxiv 23-34.
6. Hezekiah's collection of the proverbs of Solomon—xxv.-xxix. 27.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, The rich become richer.



7. Three appendices.

a. The words of Agur.

β. The words of King Lemuel.

γ. The acrostic poem in praise of the virtuous woman.

Thus the Book shows on its surface that it is not homogeneous; but we may still regard it as probable that in its collection of apophthegms we have preserved to us something of the traditional wisdom of Solomon, and the form of literature which derived its impulse from the era which he inaugurated.

1. The Introduction (i. 1-7) gives us the purport of the Book. Proverbs had always been current among the Israelites,<sup>1</sup> but the collection that follows is intended as a manual of morals. Practical ethics formed the chief sphere in which Hebrew wisdom worked. In its earlier phases it never dreamt of meddling with logic or metaphysics, or any but the simplest theology. The Book of Proverbs is marked out especially as a book for young men, and it is far from impossible that as other fathers have written volumes intended to instruct their children, so Solomon, if he ever collected his proverbs, may have had in view the training of his son Rehoboam, a training in which he desired that ethical guidance should be accompanied by practical prudence and intellectual insight.

2. The opening chapters (i. 8-ix. 18), which I have called "the Wisdom section," can hardly have come from the hand of Solomon. This section consists of fifteen didactic poems, abounding in appeals of a teacher to his pupil whom he addresses as "My son." They are a specimen of the *Mashal* in its more developed and poetic form, and they differ widely from the rest of the Book. They have peculiar words and phrases and show the influence of the Book of Job. They abound in warnings against impurity and violence,<sup>2</sup> and they remind us of the famous "Choice of Hercules" in their recurrent antithesis between the voice of Wisdom and the voice of the "strange woman" who is a type of the "*improba Siren*"—the harlot Sense. It is in these chapters that we find the frequent mention and personification of Wisdom which gave the name of "the Wisdom literature" to such works as this, Ecclesiastes, the

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xxi. 27; 1 Sam. xxiv. 13; 2 Sam. xx. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The warnings against association with robbers (i. 10-19; ii. 12-15, iv. 14-17) hardly accord with the peace and order which prevailed in the days of Solomon.



Wisdom of Solomon, and the Book of Ecclesiasticus.<sup>1</sup> In this section we have not so much the results of wisdom as exhortations to seek her diligently. "The key-note of the anthology is nothing but experience; that of the introductory treatise is Divine Teaching."<sup>2</sup> In the later chapters Wisdom is creative, but in these she contemplates herself. "There is that kind of difference," says Mr. Davidson, "between these chapters and those that follow as the difference between productivity and criticism."

The conception of Wisdom among the Hebrews was singularly wide, and the word itself was used, sometimes in a large and sometimes in a more restricted sense. It is used *objectively* of the Wisdom of God, and this Divine Wisdom is regarded either as Intrinsic, as Emanating, or as Personified. It is also used *subjectively* of Human Wisdom, and this is sometimes spoken of in its theoretical and sometimes in its practical aspect. Human wisdom in its *theoretic* aspect is what the fourth Book of Maccabees calls "A knowledge of Divine and human affairs and of their causes."<sup>3</sup> It consists of all branches of historical, scientific, artistic, thaumaturgic, and, above all, spiritual knowledge. In its *practical* aspect it consists of experience, a skill in handicrafts, and, above all, in virtue. There is scarcely one of these senses in which the word is not used in one or other passage of the apocryphal Book of Wisdom. Hence the word for wisdom is sometimes used in the plural (*Khokmoth*).<sup>4</sup> In the Book of Proverbs the first nine chapters are a glorification of Divine Wisdom spoken of as a Person, and an exhortation to seek her. In the latter chapters the wisdom spoken of is sometimes spiritual, but consists more often in having learned to apply the lessons of experience and to practise the laws of virtue.

3. In the tenth chapter a new division begins with the title, "The Proverbs of Solomon," and the character of the Book changes from continuous exhortation to isolated precepts, conveyed, for the most part, in parallel or antithetic distichs. They are arranged with scarcely a trace of connexion between the consecutive verses except that here and there a few touch

<sup>1</sup> Clement and other Fathers cite these books under the name of "All-praised Wisdom"—*ἡ πανάρετος Σοφία*.

<sup>2</sup> Cheyne, "Job and Solomon," p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> 4 Macc. i. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Prov. i. 20; ix. 11.



on the same topic or contain the same prominent word. Possibly the arrangement was sometimes due to the initial letters. This section is probably the kernel of the Book and its most ancient portion. The fact that not a few of these proverbs occur with variations in the later collection shows at once their vogue and their antiquity.

As regards their forms they differ widely from the poetic strains of the psalmists and prophets, but they follow the ordinary structure of all Hebrew poems in being based upon parallelism. The parallelism is generally confined to a distich, but is sometimes expanded into three (xxii. 29), four (xxv. 4, 5), five (xxiii. 4, 5), six (xxiii. 1-6), seven (xxiii. 6-8), or eight lines (xxiii. 22-25).<sup>1</sup>

i. The parallelism is sometimes synonymous or cognate, the second line of the couplet merely varying and emphasizing the first, as in iii. 22-24—

“ So shall they be life unto thy soul,  
And grace unto thy neck.  
Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely,  
And thy foot shall not stumble.  
When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid :  
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.”

ii. Sometimes it is *antithetic*, the second line giving the reverse side of the thought contained in the first, as in xxvii. 6, 7—

“ Faithful are the wounds of a friend ;  
But deceitful the kisses of an enemy.

“ The full soul loatheth an honeycomb,  
But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.”

This type of parallelism is the commonest, and it abounds in chapters x.-xv.

iii. Sometimes, again, there is mere symmetry and bifurcation, the parallelism being in the form or sound, and not in the sense, as in—

“ A gracious woman retaineth honour ;  
And violent men retain riches ” (xi. 16).

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<sup>1</sup> Where the number of lines is *unequal*, it is nearly certain that a line has sometimes dropped out ; where the antithesis is meaningless the text is probably corrupt (see xix. 7, LXX.)



iv. In rarer instances the parallelism is introverted, the first and last lines running parallel with each other with a pair of parallels between, as in xxiii. 15, 16—

“ My son, if thine heart be wise,  
My heart also shall rejoice :  
Yea, my reins shall rejoice  
When thy lips speak right things.” <sup>1</sup>

Turning from the form to the substance we notice the general character of the greater part of this gnomic poetry of the Hebrews. A few of the Proverbs are little more than prudential maxims to guide the intercourse of men with one another ; rules of trading and of behaviour such as the writer had observed in Courts, or in commercial dealings, or in the bazaars and streets of busy cities. Others are keen observations on common moral phenomena. He notices the dislike to poor relations,<sup>2</sup> the excuses of indolence, the miseries of ill-assorted marriage,<sup>3</sup> the error of spoiling children,<sup>4</sup> the duty of kindness to animals,<sup>5</sup> the effects of despondency and cheerfulness,<sup>6</sup> the loneliness of the human heart,<sup>7</sup> the sickness of hope deferred,<sup>8</sup> the emptiness of unintelligent beauty,<sup>9</sup> the curse of greed,<sup>10</sup> the cunning of bargainers,<sup>11</sup> the glory of righteous age.<sup>12</sup> He touches on hundreds of other little facts and trials and alleviations of life. But the Hebrew gnomologist is far from been merely utilitarian, for he constantly reveals that he is thinking of something better than human rewards and earthly sanctions.

The tone of his remarks has a twofold beauty—it is kindly and it is religious.

i. It is *kindly*. Even when *the wise man* deals with sarcasm (which is not often) his satire is never cynical, never bitter, brutal, or indiscriminating. The heart of the wise man is a gentle heart, and his satire is akin to charity. On the other hand, his sympathies are as wide as human nature. He cares for man as man and nothing which is human is alien from him. His view of

<sup>1</sup> This collection of ancient gnomes may possibly be meant to consist of five sections, each introduced by an exhortation to the young (xi. ; xiii. 1 ; xv. 20 ; xvii. 25 ; xix. 27). (Ewald).

<sup>2</sup> xiv. 20. ; xix. 7.

<sup>3</sup> xxv. 24.

<sup>4</sup> xxiii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> xii. 10.

<sup>6</sup> x. 2 ; xvii. 22.

<sup>7</sup> xiv. 10.

<sup>8</sup> xiii. 12.

<sup>9</sup> xi. 22.

<sup>10</sup> xi. 26.

<sup>11</sup> xx. 14.

<sup>12</sup> xvi. 31.



life differs widely from that of Ecclesiastes. It is genial and sunny, not gloomy and pessimistic.

ii. But there is a yet higher merit in these Proverbs, which is that as they are almost exclusively moral, so they are animated by a religious spirit.<sup>1</sup> In short and pithy sentences the wise man urges the duties of humility, of self-restraint, of kindness to animals,<sup>2</sup> of gentleness, of purity,<sup>3</sup> of charity and forgiveness,<sup>4</sup> of righteousness in all its forms. He dwells on justice and veracity, and, above all, on love to man ; but he does not give his instructions as a cold and formal moralist. He refers everything to God ; he sees everything in the light of God. His aims are not merely secular or self-interested, but he presents even intellectual truths on their religious side, deducing them constantly from man's relation to God, and seeing the source and security of all wisdom in the fear of Jehovah. "One set of terms does service to express both the intellectual and the moral wisdom. The 'wise' man means the 'righteous' man, the 'fool' is one who is godless. Intellectual terms that describe knowledge are also moral terms describing life." The practical teaching of the Proverbs differs essentially from that of the Greek and Latin gnomologists, not in its teaching, but in its sanctions. Righteousness to the Hebrew is essentially the law of Jehovah. He is the beginning, middle, and end of all morality, the Creator and Ruler of all life. Blessing and curse depend exclusively on conformity to, or disobedience of, His will. The rich and the poor meet together—He made them. The seeing eye, the hearing ear, are alike His.<sup>5</sup> In one word, "Jehovah hath made all things answering to their end."<sup>6</sup> His eyes are in every place, observing the evil and the good ;<sup>7</sup> a man's steps are from Him.<sup>8</sup> Happy is he who observes His precepts.<sup>9</sup> A little with the fear of Jehovah is better than great treasure ;<sup>10</sup> and victory comes from Him.<sup>11</sup>

This pious spirit, this derivation of all things from Jehovah, the Covenant God of Israel, is the more remarkable because in other respects the sage of Israel has few distinctive traces of the national religion. Much as he speaks of the "fear of the Lord" he has scarcely an allusion to the ceremonial laws and the ideal hopes or aspirations of his own people. It is in this respect

<sup>1</sup> See xxii. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> xii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> xvii. 9 ; xx. 9.

<sup>4</sup> xx. 22.

<sup>5</sup> xx. 12.

<sup>6</sup> xvi. 4.

<sup>7</sup> xv. 3.

<sup>8</sup> xx. 24.

<sup>9</sup> xxix. 18.

<sup>10</sup> xv. 16.

<sup>11</sup> xxi. 31.



that the literature which had its root in the era of Solomon is so distinctive in its character. We do not find in it the glowing impassioned devotion, the intense personal joys and sorrows of the sweet Psalmists of Israel. It barely even alludes to the immense structure of sacerdotalism with its imposing ritual and multitudinous observances. It has none of the burning patriotism of the Prophets. Not only the whole circle of prophetic ideas<sup>1</sup> which clustered round the names of Judah and Ephraim and Mount Sion, but also the whole circle of Mosaic institutions, and the whole circle of emotions which breathe through the lyric poetry of the Hebrews are alien from the Proverbs of the wise. The Wisdom literature, as represented by the Book of Proverbs, is general, not particularistic; human, not national.

4. The fourth section (xxii. 17–xxiv. 23) is another little anthology of the “words of the wise.” It is quite different from the long section which has preceded it. The teaching is more consecutive, the form less symmetrical, the style less antithetic. In topics and in method it more nearly resembles the first section, being the instruction given by the wise man to “my son.”<sup>2</sup>

5. The fifth brief section (xxiv. 23–34) is also introduced by a new heading—“These things also belong to the wise,” meaning perhaps that they were not attributed directly to Solomon. As it develops and emphasizes some of the previous maxims, it has been ingeniously conjectured that it may have been meant as a sort of epilogue to the Book in the form in which it was current before it received the additions made to it in the reign of Hezekiah.<sup>3</sup>

6. The sixth section of the Book (xxv.–xxix. 27) is prefaced by the interesting notice, “These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.”<sup>4</sup> It resembles in general character and in many of its expressions and topics the long third section.<sup>5</sup> The Septuagint characterizes them as “enigmatic” (*ἀδιάκριτοι*), or perhaps “miscellaneous.

<sup>1</sup> See A. B. Davidson in “The Expositor,” vol. xi. p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Notice the touches of keen insight in xxiii. 1–3; and the vivid lines on the curse of drunkenness (xxiii. 29–35); and the indignation against wrongful arrest (xxiv. 11, 12).

<sup>3</sup> In the “Speaker’s Commentary,” iv. p. 517.

<sup>4</sup> LXX., ἐξεγράψαντο.

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the unusual exhortation to agriculture (xxvii. 23–27).



The political allusions do not suit the age of Solomon,<sup>1</sup> but the insight displayed is worthy of his wisdom,<sup>2</sup> and the imagery is often strikingly beautiful.<sup>3</sup>

7. Then follow the three appendices, which have a very marked character of their own, and belong in all probability to a much later age.

*α.* The first of these (xxx.) is headed by the problematic title "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy : the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal," for which the Greek version substitutes an entirely different verse. Some of the first Hebrew scholars translate it (with alterations of some of the vowel points), "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh of Massa,<sup>4</sup> I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God, and have made an end (of the search)." To elucidate the extreme perplexities of the passage does not belong to our subject, nor is anything known about Agur ; but the "prophecy" or "burden" of Massa—if the phrase be rightly so rendered—has peculiarities which are observable at a glance—especially some similarities to the Book of Job, and the grouping of curious natural observations into threes and fours—a literary form which was common among the late Rabbis.

*β.* The second appendix is attributed to an unknown king, Lemuel, "the prophecy that his mother taught him ;" or as some Hebraists render it, "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him." If Massa be indeed the name of a place in Arabia inhabited by the descendants of the Massa mentioned in Gen. xxv. 14 among the sons of Ishmael, then perhaps Lemuel was a brother of Agur. Nothing, however, is known about him, and as the name means "unto God,"<sup>5</sup> it has been understood by some of the Fathers to be another name for Solomon,<sup>6</sup> and by Ewald to represent the ideal king, the king who is true to God. It is a brief lesson of chastity and temperance addressed to kings, but the Aramaic forms and the unclassical Hebrew show that it is of late origin.

<sup>1</sup> xxix. 2 ; xxviii. 2, 3, 12, 15, 16, 28.

<sup>2</sup> See especially xxv. 20 ; xxvii. 2, 6, 10, 14.

<sup>3</sup> See xxv. 11, 13 ; xxvi. 23 ; xxvii. 8, 17.

<sup>4</sup> For *hammassa* Grätz would read *hammoshel*, "the proverb writer. Jerome.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Lael. Numb. iii. 24.

<sup>6</sup> "Solomon was called by six names—Solomon, Jedidiah, Qohemoth, Son of Jakeh, Agur, and Lemuel" ("Aboth. d' Rabbi Nathan," c. xxxix.).



γ. The third appendix (xxx. 10-31) is the immortal picture of the virtuous woman. It is an acrostic poem, arranged alphabetically by the initial Hebrew letters of the verses. In this respect it resembles nine of the Psalms,<sup>1</sup> and the first four chapters of Lamentations. It has been assumed rather than actually proved, that the acrostic form of poetry only arose in Hebrew literature at a late period, and not earlier than the seventh century before Christ. However this may be, nothing could have been more fitly chosen to end the Book of Proverbs than a poem which so far from speaking of women as Qoheleth does, with despondent cynicism, assigns to the virtuous wife a noble position in the social order, and points to a happy and holy marriage as the crown of a pure youth which has resisted sensual temptations. It is interesting to observe how much nobler is the ideal of the writer than that of Pericles. The great Athenian thought that a woman's chief glory was to be known neither for good nor for evil ;<sup>2</sup> the sage places his ideal of womanhood in noble energy.

Such, then, is the structure, and such are the general contents, of the Book which certainly owes its impulse to Solomon, and in all probability enshrines some of his famous three thousand proverbs. It only remains to point out four features of great interest for the study of the book.

1. In the first place, it is cosmopolitan. A large part of Hebrew literature is intensely national, and even fanatically exclusive. It is not so with this Book. It recognizes in morality a common ground of consideration for all mankind. Its ethical system is adapted to the needs of human nature in general. "The word 'Israel' does not occur once ; the name 'man' (*Adam*) thirty-three times."<sup>3</sup>

2. It has often been disputed whether the Hebrews could be said to have a philosophy or not. The answer must, of course, depend very much on what conception we attach to the word philosophy. It is certain that every nation above the savage condition must have attempted in some way or other to solve the problem of existence ; and wherever we find such an attempt

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv., and (partially) ix. and x.

<sup>2</sup> Thuc. ii. 45, καὶ ἥς ἀν' ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς περίῃ ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.

<sup>3</sup> Cheyne, "Job and Solomon," p. 119.



we have at least the rudiments of a philosophy. There is, however, this great distinction between Hebrew philosophy and that of other nations, that the Hebrews from the earliest days possessed a revelation. The whole tenor of their thought was influenced by the fact that it began with the acknowledgment of one God. It argued from the Being of a God downwards to earthly phenomena. It consisted in the recognition of a Divine Providence, and the co-ordination of that truth with the many apparent disturbances of the moral order, the many perplexities introduced into an ideal scheme by the intrusion of sin and sorrow, by the apparent triumph of the wicked, and the apparent misery of the just.

3. In the attempt to meet this difficulty the Hebrew intellect passed through three marked though not always consecutive stages.

*α.* First of all in the simplest and most elementary conditions of society when there was general peace and prosperity, and men had not begun to be too introspective, the wise acquiesced in the broad general principles which they were content to accept as practically exceptionless, that under the righteous rule of a Universal Providence "the righteous shall be recompensed *in the earth*, much more the wicked and the sinner."<sup>1</sup> This is the view prevalent in *the era of generalizations*, in which no note is taken of apparent violations of the general rule.

*β.* Deeper thought, wider experience, more attentive observation, inaugurates *the era of difficulties*. If the hand of God be in history, if He is the sole agent in all human occurrences, how happens it that the wicked are often in such prosperity, and come into no such misfortune as do other folk, even the righteous? In this era a more elaborate theodiceæ becomes necessary to

"Assert eternal Providence  
And justify the ways of God to man."

Qoheleth flatly denies the old orthodox assertions of Job's friends, and declares that the righteous perish in spite of righteousness, and the wicked live long in spite of wickedness.<sup>2</sup> There was no solution for the problem except the conviction deepened by worship and the sense of God's presence, that, in

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xi. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Eccl. vii. 15.



some way or other before death, or in the hour of death itself, the wrong was righted ; or that, at any rate, the difficulty *had* a solution in the mind of an Almighty Father even if it were beyond the power of man to understand. Four of the Psalms—the Thirty-seventh, Thirty-ninth, Forty-ninth, and Seventy-third—contain deeply interesting discussions of this source of doubt ; but the most splendid monument of the mental struggle which it excited is the Book of Job.

γ. Finally, after centuries of national calamity and defeat and exile, in which the ideal “*Jashar*”—the Upright—the chosen of God—the righteous nation—was trampled under the feet of heathen enemies, and plunged into irretrievable ruin and oppression, there came the *era of acquiescence*. It is represented by the Book of Ecclesiastes. Any real attempt to solve the problems which seemed to controvert the general principle of God’s righteous government is abandoned as impossible. It is tacitly conceded that the “philosophy” of the two earlier periods is shipwrecked on the rocks of actual fact. The righteous, so far as earth is concerned, are to all appearance forsaken, and his seed do beg their bread ; so that the Divine order exists as some perfect theory which comes into violent collision with observed realities. This wrong is not always redressed in this life. Job may die upon his dunghill with his fortunes unrestored and his leprosy unhealed. The green bay-tree of the wicked man’s prosperity may not be cut down at all during his life, and he may die peacefully with children’s faces round his bed. Nothing therefore remained but to accept the inevitable fact, and to make the best of life as it is, leaving everything else in the hands of God, and still acting on the conviction that good is best, and that we shall gain all that life has to gain by being true to the best we know.

The Book of Proverbs belongs in the main to the era of principles, and that is one proof of the antiquity of the greater part of its contents. It seems to be older than the Book of Job, and to be the product of an epoch wholly different from that of the Book of Ecclesiastes, which springs from the epoch of acquiescence. Obviously the true and full solution is partly spiritual, partly eschatological. Of the spiritual solution we find sufficient glimpses both in the Book of Proverbs and in the Psalms. The wise man and the Psalmist alike felt that in the presence of God, and in conscious communion with Him, was a peace and



blessedness which were more than sufficient to atone for the sorrows of the just, even if they did not explain them.<sup>1</sup>

δ. The eschatological solution in its full certainty was as yet but dimly dreamed of.<sup>2</sup> Not even to the Psalmists, or the Wise, or the Prophets, was there a distinct revelation of that world beyond the grave, where the balances of human injustice shall be redressed, and where two words, "Come," and "Depart," shall decide all earthly questions and all controversies for ever. It was Christ, not Moses, not Solomon, not Isaiah, who brought life and immortality to light.<sup>3</sup>

4. A fourth most interesting fact about the Book of Proverbs and the "sapiential" literature in general, is this :—that though in one sense it is not Messianic, though its centre of gravity is by no means that burning conviction of a Coming Deliverer, which inspires the Prophets ; it yet contains an element distinctly Christological. Wisdom—wisdom which has almost passed out of an abstraction or a mere poetic personification—is conceived by them as a sort of self-existent entity, as representing God in His immediate relation to mankind. The Wisdom of the Sapiential Books was gradually developed into the Word (*Logos*) of Philo, and in all that Philo says of the Logos as God with men we see that he is, as it were, knocking at the very gates of Truth. St. John did not shrink from adopting the name "the Logos" as a title of the Divine Redeemer, whether he derived it directly from Philo or from the Palestinian "Memra." Our Lord Himself speaks of the "Wisdom of God"<sup>4</sup> upbraiding men with the murder of God's prophets ; and St. Paul tells us that Christ is "the Wisdom of God."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxiii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> We read the belief in immortality into such passages as x. 25, xi. 4, but very little consideration shows that they are too vague and general to bear this weight of meaning. In xii. 28 we read, "In the way of righteousness there is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death," or "is immortality" ; but the sense is quite uncertain. The Vulgate has "iter autem devium ducit ad mortem ;" and the LXX., ὁδοὶ δε μνησικᾶκων εἰς θάνατον ; and a slight change in the Hebrew gives "but an abominable way leads unto death." In xiv. 32, "the righteous hath hope in his death" may be "the righteous taketh refuge in his integrity" as in the LXX. and the Peshito.

<sup>3</sup> On the three "eras" of Hebrew thought see the suggestive papers in "The Expositor" (vols. xi., xii.) to which I have already referred.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xi. 49.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. i. 24, 30.



5. And thus, fifthly, the Book of Proverbs, though so much of it seems to consist of what has been absurdly called "cold morality" is akin to the noblest parts of the Old Testament. For mere formalism the sage has the same contempt as the most indignant of the seers. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord,"<sup>1</sup> and "how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind."<sup>2</sup> "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."<sup>3</sup> Burnt-offerings are in themselves wholly inefficacious, for "by mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."<sup>4</sup> If the morality of "the wise" is not touched by the profound emotion of the Psalmists, it rises far superior to the worthless triviality of a Pharisaic externalism.

6. Lastly, there are few books of which the phraseology and thoughts have left a deeper impression than the Book of Proverbs upon the language of the New Testament. Though its prevailing tone is ethical rather than spiritual, though many of its maxims are ostensibly prudential, though it knows nothing of rites and ceremonies, though it passes without notice the Messianic hope; yet so transcendent is the duty and importance of ordinary righteousness, of common morality, that the Book is constantly referred to in the Gospel-preaching of His servants who said, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> xv. 8.<sup>2</sup> xxi. 27.<sup>3</sup> xxi. 3.<sup>4</sup> xvi. 6.

<sup>5</sup> See references to the Book of Proverbs in Luke xiv. 10; John iii. 13; Gal. vi. 7; 2 Cor. vi. 10, ix. 7; Heb. xii. 5, 6, 13; James iv. 6, 14, 16; 1 Peter ii. 17, iv. 18; 2 Peter ii. 22



## CHAPTER XVI.

### LEGENDS OF SOLOMON.

Predominance of Solomon in legend—Knowledge ascribed to Him—I. The Talmud : i. Solomon, the demon Ashmodai, and the Worm Shamir ; ii. Solomon, Naama, and the ring ; iii. The Haggada, Solomon and the demons—II. Legends in the Qur'ân—i. His power—ii. His early judgment—iii. The magic wind ; the steeds ; the hoopoe ; Balkis, Queen of Sheba—III. Ethiopian legend—IV. The Angel of Death.

THE existence of so many and such strange and widely-spread legends respecting Solomon is a proof of the extent to which his greatness haunted the imaginations of Eastern peoples. If his name is passed over with so few allusions in the sacred literature, which refers so incessantly to the house of David, the proportion is reversed in the domains of fable and tradition. There Solomon is pre-eminent, and David is for the most part ignored.

We have already seen that he was credited with that branch of wisdom which was identified with thaumaturgy. He was supposed to know the language of birds and animals,<sup>1</sup> and to be skilled in all the hidden powers of roots and herbs.<sup>2</sup> Besides this the, pentagram on his seal, and his knowledge of the Incommunicable Name was believed to endow him with power over the demons.

“ To him were known—so Hagar's offspring tell—  
The powerful vigil and the starry spell,

---

<sup>1</sup> Hillel was supposed to have the same knowledge (Sopherim, xvi. 9).

<sup>2</sup> The popular name “ Solomon's Seal ” of the beautiful and interesting plant the *Convallaria*.



The midnight call, hell's shadowy legions tread,  
 And sounds that wake the slumbers of the dead.  
 Hence all his might, for who could these oppose?  
 And Tadmor thus, and Syrian Baalbec rose."

1. The chief legend respecting Solomon in the Talmud is a long one, and may probably suffice as a specimen. I have a little softened down some of its more glaring irrelevances and crudities, and would only introduce it with the passing caution that in these Jewish writings many of the stories may have had no higher object than to amuse the weary pupils of the Rabbis, but others had in them deeper meanings than those that meet the ear, and some of them—as is in part the case with the one which follows—were the distorted outcome of the extraordinary, but recognized methods of Rabbinic exegesis.

The starting-point of the Talmudic legend is the verse which tells us that "there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was in building."<sup>1</sup>

"How am I to build the Temple without iron tools?" asked Solomon of the Rabbis.

"Why not use the worm Shamîr?" they replied. "Moses used it in engraving the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel on the precious stones of the Urim and Thummim." He had been reduced to the same perplexity when he had been ordered to engrave their names "according to the engravings of a signet."<sup>2</sup> He wrote the letters with ink on one side, put the worm Shamîr on the opposite side, and the letters sank spontaneously into the stones.

"But where is the worm Shamîr to be found?" asked the King.

"You must," they replied, "extort the secret from the male and female demons if they know it."

We must pause in the story to observe that the notion of Solomon's mastery over the male and female demons was deduced from Eccles. ii. 8, where we are told that Solomon "gat him men-singers and women-singers, the delights of the sons of men, as *shiddah veshiddoth*." In the Authorized Version those words are rendered "*musical instruments, and that of all sorts*." The Vulgate renders them "cups"; the Septuagint and Syriac, "cup-bearers, male and female." The Revised Version has,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings vi. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxviii. 20.



“concubines.” Some of the Rabbis rendered it, “chariots for lords and for ladies ;” but the Babylonian Talmud makes it mean, “male and female demons.”

Accordingly Solomon summoned a male and female demon, and put them to the torture to force them to tell where he could procure the worm Shamîr.

But the demons could not tell him. The utmost that could be forced from them was that, though they did not know, yet perhaps Ashmodai, the king of the demons, knew.

“And where is Ashmodai to be found?” asked the king.

“He lives,” said the Shid and the Shiddeth, “on a mountain, where he has dug a pit, which he fills with water, covers it with a stone, and seals it with his seal. Daily he ascends to the Heavenly Academy, and then descends to the Schools of the Rabbis. On returning he examines the seal to see if any one has tampered with his well, and when he finds it untouched, he drinks the water, re-seals the well, and departs.”

On receiving this information Solomon despatched Benaiah to the haunt of Ashmodai with a fleece of wool, some wine-skins, and a chain and ring engraved with the Holy Name. Benaiah drained the water from the well of Ashmodai into another, plugged the duct with a fleece, filled the demon’s well with wine, and mounted a tree to watch the result.

Ashmodai returned, found the seal undisturbed, raised the stone, and found his well full of wine. For a time he would not drink it, “for,” said he, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”<sup>1</sup>

After a time however he became thirsty, drank, and slept. Then Benaiah slipped down from his tree, and chained him with the magic chain. When Ashmodai awoke he would have torn it off, but he dared not when Benaiah said, “The name of thy Master is upon thee.”

We will omit, as irrelevant to our narrative, the curious adventures which befell the demon while he meekly followed the Captain of the Bodyguard into the presence of Solomon. Arrived at Jerusalem, he was left three days in uncertainty, till Solomon summoned him into his presence. No sooner had he entered the hall than, marking off six feet of ground with his staff, he said to the king, “When thou diest this much earth is

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xx. 1.



all that you shall possess, yet not content with having conquered the world, you have got me also into your power."

"I want nothing of thee," answered the king; "but I am building the Temple, and I wish to be told where I can find the worm Shamîr."

"I do not possess the Shamîr," said the demon. "It belongs to the Prince of the Sea, and he never parts with it except to the *Duchiphas* or Lapwing, who makes an oath to return it safely."<sup>1</sup>

"And what does the lapwing do with it?" asked Solomon.

"He takes it," said Ashmodai, "to a rocky hill, which, by its means, he splits asunder. Into the clefts he drops seeds of plants and trees, and thus the place becomes green and habitable."

Accordingly Solomon sent and searched for the nest of the lapwing, and finding that it contained a young brood, he had it covered with a glass, so that the bird might see its young, but be unable to get at them. Off flew the lapwing, obtained the Shamîr from the Prince of the Sea, and dropped it on the glass. Then Solomon's messenger raised a loud shout, and the terrified bird flew away. The messenger seized the Shamîr, and the bird in despair killed itself. By means of this insect, and with the enforced service of Ashmodai, whom he kept imprisoned, Solomon built the Temple.

One day when they were alone together the king asked the demon, "Wherein consisted their superiority to man?"

"Take this chain off my neck, and give me thy signet-ring," said Ashmodai, "and I will show thee."

The king undid the chain, and handed the ring to his captive, who instantly assumed colossal size, swallowed up Solomon, and cast him forth four hundred miles away. The demon then assumed his guise and ruled in his name.

Meanwhile Solomon was bereft of everything, and exclaimed, "What profit hath a man of all his labour?"<sup>2</sup> *This* (this staff) is my sole portion of all my labour." With the staff Solomon went begging from door to door with the piteous words, "I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So rendered by our Authorized Version in Lev. xi. 19. In the Targum this bird is called *Nagger Tura*, "the Mountain Splitter."

<sup>2</sup> Eccles. i. 3; ii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Eccles. i. 12. It is some rude distortion of this story which is found in Bede, "De Salomone," quoted by Pineda.



The Sanhedrin met to consult who this could be, and argued that if he were mad he would hardly go on repeating the same words. They asked Benaiah "whether the king had lately sent for him?"

"No," said Benaiah, "not for forty days."

They inquired if the supposed king ever visited his harem?

"Yes," was the answer.

"Then, look at his feet," said the Sanhedrin; "if he has feet like those of a fowl, he is a demon."

"He always comes in stockings," was the answer.

Confirmed in their suspicions, the Sanhedrin sent the real Solomon into his palace, armed with chain and ring.

On seeing him Ashmodai shrieked and fled; but Solomon always remained in great terror of him, and this is the reason why in the Song of Songs (iii. 7, 8) in the description of Solomon's palanquin, it is said to be guarded by sixty valiant men with swords "*because of fear in the night.*"<sup>1</sup>

Ashmodai is the demon who plays so large a part in the Book of Tobit—

"with the fishy fume  
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse  
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent  
From Media post to Egypt there fast-bound."<sup>2</sup>

As for the worm Shamîr there seems to be some reasons for believing that we trace it in the Greek *σμίρις*, and the English *emery*; so that the legend may be an early proof of the use of *corundum* for the purpose of polishing and drilling holes in hard precious stones.

2. In one version of the foregoing legend there occurs an episode relating to the period of Solomon's wanderings. It is that while he was thus deprived of his kingdom, he came to a place called Mash Kemim, where he was appointed head cook in the palace of Ana Hanun, the king of Ammon. While he was thus employed, Naama, the king's daughter, fell in love with him, and determined to fly with him to a distant land. One day as she was preparing a fish for dinner she found a ring in

<sup>1</sup> This story is related at full length in Gittin, f. 68, 1, 2. See Hershon, "Talmud. Miscell." pp. 96, ff. Genesis, pp. 189, ff.

<sup>2</sup> "Paradise Lost," iv. 170.



its belly. This turned out to be the very ring which the king of the demons had flung into the sea, and by means of it the king recovered his father's throne.<sup>1</sup> This story of a fish and a ring occurs in the legend of Polycrates of Samos, and in that of St. Kentigern, which is the origin of the fish and ring on the arms of the city of Glasgow.

3. In the Haggada—the legendary and allegorical lore of Rabbinic teaching—Solomon sometimes stands as a mere emblem of wisdom. Thus we read :

“The demons owe their birth to four nocturnal spectres named Lilith, Naama, Aguereth, and Mahala. Each of these four spectres rules during one season of the year, and they assemble themselves on Mount Nishpah. They direct their flight from the east towards the north, and Solomon rules them all, and makes use of them at his pleasure.”

This is nothing but an ethical myth of the way in which man is injured by the attacks of vice.

Lilith, a winged spectre of night, which injures children especially, is Ignorance.

Naama is Sensuality.

Aguereth is Doubt and Error.

Mahala is Superstition.

They meet on Mount Nishpah which is near the mountains of Darkness.

Solomon, the representative of human wisdom and self-control, is able to conquer and suppress them.<sup>2</sup>

II. Turning from the Talmud to the Qur'ân, we find Solomon made the theme for these legends, and others of Arabian origin yet more wild.

There we find that all his evil thaumaturgy was due not to himself but to the tricks of demons (ginns) who stole his ring and assumed his shape. “It was not Solomon who misbelieved, but the devils who misbelieved, teaching men sorcery.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Emek. Hammelech, f. 14, 4. Hershon, “Talmud. Miscell.” f. 160. Also in the Yalqut on 1 Kings.

<sup>2</sup> See Eisenmerger, “Entd. Jud.” ii. 418. Schwab's “Berākhoth,” p. xxviii. (Comp. Jer. xiii. 16.)

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ân ii. 95. Chapter of the Heifer. This wonderful ring, says the Persian poet E'madi, is only a symbol of Solomon's wisdom. In one Talmudic story, also alluded to in the Qur'ân, Solomon conquers the King of Sidon, and takes captive his daughter Gerâdeh, who becomes his favourite



“The legend of Solomon,” says Professor Palmer, “his seal inscribed with the holy name by which he could control all the powers of nature, his carpet or throne that used to be transported with him on the wind wherever he pleased, his power over the ginns, and his knowledge of the language of birds and—beasts, are commonplaces in Arabic writings.”<sup>1</sup>

The following are some of the allusions to him in the sacred book of Islam.

i. “And to Solomon were subjected the winds blowing stormily to him at his bidding to the land which we have blessed—for all things did he know; and some devils to dive for him,” namely, to fish up pearls and treasures from the depths of the sea, “and to do other works besides.”<sup>2</sup>

ii. In the Chapter of the Prophets<sup>3</sup> we are told that on one occasion some sheep strolled into a neighbour’s field and injured it. The owner appealed to David, who adjudged that the sheep were forfeited to him. Solomon, however, who was then only eleven years old, stood by his father, and suggested that the owner of the field should only have the produce of the flock, and only till the shepherd should have restored the field to its former condition. And this judgment was approved by David.

iii. The ginns who were subjected to Solomon are male and female, good and bad. The bad ginns are generally called *Ifrit*. They all live on Mount Qaf.

But the story which is most often alluded to by Mohamed is introduced as follows in the Chapter of Sebâ (Qur’ân, xxxiv. 10): “To Solomon we gave the wind: its morning journey was a month, and its evening journey was a month.”

This obedient wind was given to Solomon in reward for an

queen. But she and her maidens are in such constant anguish at the death of her father, that Solomon ordered the devils to make an image of him. It is made, and the Sidonian ladies worship it. To punish Solomon for thus encouraging idolatry, the demon Sakhar is permitted to steal his ring, by assuming his form, and getting it from his concubine, Amânah, to whom he sometimes entrusted it. This is alluded to in words, “And we did try Solomon, and threw upon his throne *a form*. Then he turned repentant, and said, My Lord, pardon me, and grant me a kingdom that is not seemly for any after me” (Qur’ân, xxxviii. 34).

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Books of the East, Qur’ân, ii. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Qur’ân, xxi. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Qur’ân, xxi. 79.



act of piety which I will narrate in the words of the Qur'ân as they are expanded by the various Arabic commentaries.<sup>1</sup>

Solomon was once passing in review his thousand mares between the hours of the noon and evening prayer. Only nine hundred had passed him at the time of evening prayer, and in his eagerness he forgot the hour. When he remembered it he was stricken with remorse, and immediately began to slaughter the horses as a sacrifice to Allah.<sup>2</sup>

Allah, in reward for his faithfulness, gave him the wind, soft and strong and pleasant, to wait on him and transport him in a moment where he would, as he sat on his throne or carpet. As a reward for the same piety the ginns became his servants, "and made for him what he pleased of chambers and images, and dishes like troughs, and firm pots."<sup>3</sup> This, says Al Moussali, "is to illustrate that man never yields anything to God in this world, without receiving something much better in return."

iv. In the Chapter of the Ant this magic means of locomotion becomes very prominent.

With his hosts of ginns, and men, and birds, Solomon came to the Valley of the Ants, and three miles off he hears the queen of the Ants say, "O ye ants, go into your dwellings that Solomon and his hosts crush you not."

And he laughed, smiling at her speech, and said, "O Lord, excite me to be thankful."

And he reviewed the birds, and said, "How is it that I see not the hoopoe? I will surely torment him."

The hoopoe was very needful to him, for the bird was always able to show him water under the earth, whenever he needed it for his ablutions. Led by the hoopoe the demons took the water away and Solomon could not perform these ablutions. So he punished the hoopoe by plucking out its feathers and tail, and casting it in the sun so that it might suffer from thirst. The bird afterwards appeared before him and was forgiven.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Palmer's translation of the Qur'ân, in the Sacred Books of the East, and Lane's Selections with interwoven Commentary, pp. 232 ff.

<sup>2</sup> He said, "Verily I have loved the love of good things better than the remembrance of my Lord, until (the sun) was hidden behind the veil. Bring them (the mares) back to me. And he began to sever their legs and necks" (Qur'ân, xxxviii. 34, Chapter of Sebâ).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xxxiv. 10., Chapter of Sebâ. D'Herbelot, "Eibl. Orient." iii. 332.

<sup>4</sup> An exquisite form of this legend about Solomon and the hoopoe may be found narrated in Curzon's "Monasteries of the Levant."



Then the hoopoe told him about Balkis, queen of Sebâ, and her throne of gold and silver and pearl and rubies and chrysolite. Coming to Sebâ he saw Balkis and her people worshipping the sun, and gave the hoopoe a letter to take to her, bidding her to worship God. With the advice of her people she goes to visit Solomon. She sends a present before her of a thousand boys and girls, five hundred bricks of gold, a jewelled crown, musk, ambergris, an undrilled pearl, and an onyx drilled with a crooked hole. "If he be a mere king," she says, "he will accept them—if a prophet, he will not." Solomon does not accept them, but shows his wisdom by drilling the pearl and threading the onyx (with the worm Shamîr). Then a ginn, or according to others his Vizier Asaph, at his order, and in the glance of an eye, conveys to him the throne of the Queen of Sheba, which she finds ready for her at her arrival.

"And it was said unto her, Enter the court ; and when she saw it, she reckoned it to be an abyss of water, and she uncovered her legs. Said he, Verily it is a court paved with glass. Said she, My Lord, verily I have wronged myself, but I am resigned with Solomon to God, the Lord of the world."

Then Solomon married Balkis. The Arabs say that she was his concubine ; the Ethiopians that she was his wife, and that their son was diligently trained in the Law and helped in his kingdom by the choicest elders of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

III. Turning from Jewish, Ethiopian, Arabic legends, we find that even among the Persians Solomon plays a great part. He is the hero of the Suleiman-Nameh, attributed to Firdusi, and is confounded with Djemschid, the Lord of the Genii. They point to his great throne built by the genii at Persepolis—the 'Tahkt-i-Suleiman—and tell how in one day he breakfasted at Persepolis, dined at Baalbek, and supped at Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

IV. We may end with one more legend which in various forms is still found in the East.<sup>3</sup>

One day Solomon was standing with his chief vizier on the summit of the Temple, which was approached by many steps. And as they gazed around, the vizier caught sight of the dusky

<sup>1</sup> See Ludolf, "Hist. Æthiop." ii. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Chardin, D'Herbelot, Ouseley.

<sup>3</sup> See for other legends D'Herbelot, "Bibl. Orient." iii. 335. Hottinger "Hist. Orient." 97. Weill, "Bibl. Legenden." 225-279.



figure of one who had approached to the foot of the ascending stair, and who, as he did so, threw one glance upwards, and then, with his eyes on the ground, began slowly to mount.

The vizier was terrified, for in that one glance he had recognized the awful features of Azrael, the Angel of Death.

In his terror he said to Solomon, "O king, the Angel of Death has looked at me ; lend me thy magic carpet that I may escape him."

Solomon allowed the vizier to use the magic carpet, and standing on it he instantly wished that he should be conveyed to the steepest and farthest summit of Mount Caucasus.

And thither he was carried as on the wings of the wind. And the Angel of Death slowly ascended the Temple, and when he had reached the summit, he said to Solomon, "O king, I glanced upward for a moment at that man, thy vizier, because, being commanded to take his soul on the steepest and farthest summit of Caucasus, I saw him here with thee on the Temple roof."

The king bowed himself and said, "Angel ! he awaits thee on the top of Caucasus."

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"Such the faint echo of departed days  
Still sound Arabia's legendary lays ;  
And thus their fabling bards delight to tell  
How lovely were thy tents, O Israel."

THE END.



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